

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

MADISON CAWEIN

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The Giant and the Star

The Giant and the Star

Little Annals in Rhyme

By
Madison Cawein



Boston
Small, Maynard & Company
Publishers

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The University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A.

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THE GIANT AND THE STAR

TO MY LITTLE SON PRESTON

Y*OU, who are four years old;
You, with the eyes of blue;
You, with the age of gold
Young in the heart of you,
Boy with the eyes of blue:*

*You, with the face so fair,
Innocent-uttered words,
All the glad sunlight there,
Music of all the birds,
Boy, in your face and words:*

*Take you my sheaf of rhymes,
Sung for your childish ear;
Rhymes you have loved, at times
Begged for, and sat to hear,
Lending a loving ear.*

*Since you have listened, sweet,
They to some worth attained;
Since in your heart's young beat
They for a while remained,
They to some worth attained.*

The Giant and the Star

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

HERE's the tale my father told,
Walking in the park one night,
When the stars shone big and bright,
And the autumn wind blew cold:—
Once a giant lived of old
In a far-off country,—far
As the moon is,—where one star,
Golden bright and fair of ray,
Lit the people on their way,
In the darkness gone astray.

And this star was beautiful
As a baby's eyes of blue,
And as bright as they are, too,
Brighter, father said. And who'll
Ever guess what happened? You'll
Wonder when I tell you that
This great, ugly giant sat
In his den, among the bones
Of dead pilgrims, luckless ones,
Throwing at this star big stones.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

By his side a lion crouched,
A great cub, who helped him catch
Men and women; keeping watch
Night and day: the giant slouched
In or out the cave and pouched
Travelers. His club, a tree,
Knotted, flung across his knee.
So he lounged or sat, his eyes,
Red as flames, fixed on the skies,
Watching for that star to rise.

For, you see, he'd had no meat
For a week or two; the light
Of the star led people right;
He just gnashed his teeth and eat
Herbs; the lion at his feet
Huddled, mad with hunger, too;
Glaring, as all lions do,
Gaunt it crouched and whined and howled,
While the giant prowled and prowled,
Or sat sullen and just growled.

How he hated all mankind!
So he growled there all day long;
And his big voice, like a gong,
Made the mountain ring. And blind,

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Like a bat, without a mind,
He could see no sense or use
In that star; so would abuse,
Curse it, all because its light,
Like a lamp, led pilgrims right,
And they were n't lost in night.

For, you see, the only food
Of this awful ogre was
Men and women; and because
They escaped him in the wood, —
And it happened that he could
Never get enough to eat, —
Waiting there for human meat,
Thus he thought, "If it were *out*,
Then they'd come my way, no doubt,
Having night here all about.

"I'll just *blow* it out," he said,
And heaved up his bulky bones,
And went grumbling up the stones
To the very mountain's head,
Shaking with his mighty tread
All the crags and pines around.
Then he sat there on the ground
And began to blow and blow,
Till at last, oh slow, so slow!
Duller grew that star's bright glow.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Then the giant stopped a bit,
And drew in another breath:
Saying, "*This* will be its death!"
Bulged his cheeks and blew at it,
Blew and blew and never quit
Till the star was blown quite out.
Then he rose and, with a shout,
Back into his den again
He went lumbering; the plain
Groaned; the mountain felt the strain.

In his cave he squatted, grim,
Humped and ugly, with his club
Flung across his knees; his cub,
Mountain lion, close to him,
Glaring; both its eyes a rim
Of green smoulder. And that night,
Sure enough, the giant was right:
Since the star no longer shone,
People lost their way alone,
And he captured many a one.

And they squatted in their den,
He and his big lion cub,
By his side his bloody club;
Squatted, snarling, crunching men —

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

That night must have brought them ten.
And when all were eaten he,
The old giant, groaningly
Raised himself and went, I think,
To a stream to get a drink,
Foaming at the mountain's brink.

He had clean forgotten now
All about that star, you know,
That had lit the world below:
Now it was so dark, I vow,
He got lost too; don't know how;
Cursed himself and said, "Odsblood!
I've got lost in this curst wood!
Wish I had a torch. No doubt
That old star threw light about. —
Sorry now I blew it out!"

Hardly had he spoken when
Crash he went, huge club and all,
Headlong o'er the mountain wall,
Where he'd thrown the bones of men,
Often, he had eaten. — Then
How he bellowed! and the rocks
Echoed with loud breakbone knocks
As adown the mountain-side
Sheer he plunged; limbs sprawling wide,
Fell and broke his neck and died.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And the next day, father said,
Came a hunter with a bow,
Found that lion-cub, you know,
Crouching near that giant's head;
With his bow he shot it dead. —
And that night, as broad as day,
Pilgrims journeying their way,
Saw a light grow, bar on bar,
Lighting them the road afar.
God had lit another star.

TOYLAND

I

THERE 's a story no one knows,
But myself, about a rose
And a fairy and a star
Where the Toyland people are.
Once when I had gone to bed, —
Mother said it was a dream, —
From a rose above my head,
Growing by the window-beam,
Out there popped a fairy's head.

II

And he nodded at me: smiled:
Said, " You 're fond of stories, eh? —
Well, I know a star each child
Ought to know. It's far away
For *your* kind, but not for me.
I will take you to that star,
Where you 'll hear new stories; see?
Close your eyes. It is n't far —
That is, 't is n't far for *me*."

III

And he'd hardly spoken when
From the rose there came a moth;
And before you'd counted ten
We were on it, and were both
Flying to that star that made
Silver sparkles in the air.
And, though I was not afraid,
I was glad when we were there,
And the moth was stabled white
In a lily-bud, and we
Went to find the fay or sprite
Who, he said, would welcome me.

IV

And we found her. 'T was n't long
Till we heard a twittering song,
And a toy-bird with white eyes
Flew before us from the skies,—
Like those in my Noah's Ark,—
And we followed it; and came
To the strangest land: our park
Is just like it, just the same.
Toy-trees, squirrels, birds and brooks,
And a castle on the hill,
Just like those in story-books;
And upon its windowsill

TOYLAND

Leaned a lovely Princess. She
Smiled at me, and that was all,
As a doll smiles; and to me
She was like a great big doll.

V

Then, before I knew it, I
Was inside her palace, there
In the room; and everywhere
Dolls and story-books and, my!
All the dolls began to sing
Rhymes, or read; and others told
Stories just like everything:
Better stories than the old
Ones my father reads me in
Mother Goose and books like Grimm,
That he hates so to begin:
Tales for which I bother him,
Since, he says, both tales and rhymes
He has read a thousand times.

VI

Blue Beard and the Yellow Dwarf,
And the lovely Rapunzel, —
She whose hair was once a scarf
For a prince to climb by; Nell,

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Little Nell, — or else her twin, —
Who, somehow, had happened in, —
And the Sleeping Beauty, who
Seemed asleep and sat there dumb;
Hansel and sweet Grethel too,
Snow-Drop and Hop-o'-my-Thumb;
Rumpelstiltzkin, Riding Hood,
And the Babes-lost-in-the-Wood,
Met around a little table,
Where I sat beside a Queen,
Queen of Hearts, and, dressed in green,
Robin Hood, a-eating tarts,
While old Æsop told a fable,
Sitting by the King of Hearts.

VII

And the waiters were Bo Peep,
Knave of Hearts and Marjory Daw;
Boy Blue, slow as if asleep,
And the Woman who slept on Straw.
And the little dishes all,
Though they seemed so, were not small;
Painted blue and green and gold
With the stories I'd heard told,
Pictures forming of themselves,
Of the Elf Queen and the Elves.

TOYLAND

Never, never have I seen
Service like it. Then the talk!
All about the Fairy Queen
And the Land of Tarts and Pies,
Where those three fat brothers go,
Greedygut, with tiny eyes
Like a pig's; and Sleepyhead,
With his candle, going to bed;
And old creepy-footed Slow.
Of these three they made great talk,
And that Land where Scarecrows stalk,
And the Jack-o'-Lanterns grow,
Row on glaring goblin row.

VIII

Suddenly, among them there,
At my back, above my chair,
Cried a Cuckoo Clock, and — why!
There I was back home; and I
Was n't nowhere but in bed
And my mother standing by
Smiling at me. — I could cry
When I think the things they said
That I *can't* remember now
Though I try and try and try.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

But I know *this* anyhow:—
I *was* in that star, I know,
And in Toyland. Does n't seem
Anything but true, although
Mother says it was a dream.

THE LAND OF CANDY

I

THERE was once a little boy —
So my father told me — who
Never cared for any toy,
But just sweet things, as boys do,
Cakes and comfits, cream and ice,
All the things that boys think nice,
That they like, but ought not to;
Doctors say so, more or less,
And their parents, too, I guess:
But *they* don't know everything. —
Boys know something, too, by jing.

II

Well, this little boy he cried
Day and night for sweet things; ate
Cake and candy soon and late —
That is, if they did n't hide
All such things in some good place
Where he could n't find them. So,
One day, when they did n't know,
In the park he met a man, —

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Funniest man you ever saw, —
In a suit of red and tan,
Thin, and straighter than a straw,
Like a stick of candy; and
This old man just took his hand,
Led him off to Candyland.

III

First place that they came to, why,
Was a wood that reached the sky;
Forest of Stick Candy. My!
How the little boy made it fly!
Why, the tree trunks were as great,
Big around as, at our gate,
Are the sycamores; the whole
Stripéd like a barber's pole:
And the ground was strewn and strown
With the pieces winds had blown
From the branches: and as fast
As one fell another grew
In its place; and, through and through,
Each was better than the last.

IV

After this they came into
A great grove of Sugar-Plums,
And an orchard, such as few
Ever saw, of Creams and Gums,

THE LAND OF CANDY

Marshmallow and Chocolate,
Where the boy just ate and ate
Till he was brimful and felt
As, I guess, a turkey feels
On Thanksgiving; to its belt
Stuffed with chestnuts. And the seals
At the circus, that I saw,
Looked just like that boy, I know,
When he'd eaten bushels — pshaw!
Loads of all that candy. Oh!
He just lay down there and sighed
When he couldn't eat no more,
Though he'd eaten more than four
Boys could eat, yes, twenty-four,
And he just lay there and *cried*,
Cried to eat *more*. And the man,
The Stick-Candy Man, he said
Never a word; just smiled instead
Sweet as any candy can.

V

When they'd rested there awhile,
That old man with his sweet smile
Took him by the hand and said,
“Don't you think it's time for bed?”
But the boy he shook his head:
“I want cakes and ice-cream now;

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Then I'll go and not before." —
Wish that I could show you how
Sweet that old man smiled then! *Sweet?* —
It was just like honeyed heat
Trickling down from head to feet,
Or just like a candy store
Flung right at you. But the boy,
At that smile, felt no great joy,
But as if he'd eaten more
Than he ought to. "I feel ill,"
Said he. "If I had a drink
I'd feel better. — Say, I think
I smell water. What's that hill?
Is it snow?" — The old man smiled,
Smiled that smile again, and, quick, —
For it made him feel so sick, —
From him turned the boy; and, — "Child,"
Like some melting sugar-stick,
Drooled the old man, "I'll be bent,
Or be eaten, it's *not* snow:
But to me it's evident,
If you really want to know,
That hill's ice-cream. Feel the chill
On my neck now. . . . If you will
We will go there." — And they went:
Found a stranger country still,
Filled with greater wonderment.

THE LAND OF CANDY

VI

The very *ground* was sugar there;
And all around them, everywhere,
Great cakes grew up like mushrooms;
 some
No bigger than a baby's thumb,
And others huge as hats they wear
In picture books of pirate kings:
And some were jelly-cakes; great rings
Of reddest jelly; macaroons
And sponge-cakes like enormous moons:
And every kind of cake there is
Just overrun the premises.
And in the middle of the land
A mountain, they had seen afar,
Of Ice-Cream towered white and grand;
Such mountains as there only are
In Candyland. And from it fell
Two fountains: one of Lemonade,
The other Sodawater. — Well,
The little boy just took a *spade*
And *dug* into that mountainside
And ate and ate, and cried and cried,
Because he could n't eat it all,
Nor all the cakes that grew around,
Like mushrooms, from the sugary ground;

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Nor drink up every waterfall
Of Soda and of Lemonade. —
(I wish that I'd been there to aid!
Don't you? I *know* I'd done my best. —
And father said *he knew*, or guessed,
That that old man felt sorry, too,
Because the boy just *had* to rest.
And *I* felt sorry. Would n't you?)

VII

And that big hill would never melt:
Just stayed the same. No sooner than
One took a spoonful it began
To grow back in its place. One dealt
It out in shovelfuls and still
There was no less in that huge hill.
And fast — yes, faster than one knew,
The mushroom-cakes around you grew;
Wherever one was taken, why,
Up came another, better by
A long ways: and it were no use
To *try* to drink the fountains dry:
They ran the more; a perfect sluice,
My father said, that played the deuce
With any little boy that'd try.

VIII

So in that land a long, long time,
At least a month, he stayed. Each day
Was like the other. — (Sometime I'm
A-going to Candyland and stay
A year, or longer; yes, you bet!
No matter what my parents say.) —
What happened next? — why, I forget.
But one day in the Orchard where
Cream Candies grew — or was it in
The Woods of Candystick? or there
Where brown the Sugarlands begin
Of Mushroom-cakes? — the old man found
The boy flat, lying on the ground,
The sugar-earth kicked up around,
And cakes and cream knocked all about
And broken into bits, and he
Just crying fit to kill; all out,
And sick of everything, you see.
And when the old man smiled and smiled
That smile again, the boy went wild,
And shook his fist right in his face
And shrieked out at him, "You Disgrace!
Get out! You make me sick!" — A stone
(You see rock-candy strewed the place
Just like the stones that strew our own)

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

He picked and aimed and would have thrown
And knocked the old man's head right
off,

Had he not stopped him, with a cough,
Saying, "My boy! why, this won't do!
What ails you, eh?"—The boy said,
"You! —

Don't smile at me! — I'll break your head!
You sugar-coated pill! with this! —
I'm sick of sweets and *you*," he said,
"Your face so like a candy-kiss? —
What *ails* me? — Eggs! and bacon! bread!
And milk and toast and chicken-wings,
One never has here! things they fed
Me on at home! *those* are the things! —
Take me back home where I can eat
The things I never wanted once —
But now I want them! bread and meat! —
Oh, wasn't I an awful dunce! —
Now, you old sinner, take me back!" —
And with those words the old man's face
Fell in a frown that seemed to crack
It all to pieces. All grew black
About the little boy a space;
But when it lightened up once more
Why, *there!* he was n't any place
But right in front of their big door —

THE LAND OF CANDY

His home. — I say! my! he was glad;
And hurried in, a different lad
From him who had gone out. — And he,
From that time on, took toast and tea,
And milk and eggs, and never teased,
As once he used to tease, for cakes
And candy and such things! — My sakes!
But weren't both his parents pleased!

SUN AND FLOWERS

THE spring is coming! hear it blow!
The rain and wind have cleared the snow;
And I am going to play my fill
With sunlight on the windy hill.

And I am going to laugh and run,
And be the comrade of the sun;
And, like the wildflowers, wink my eyes
At him and at the springtime skies.

And I am going to leap and shout
And toss my hair and arms about,
And fill my soul with sunshine as
The blossoms do and waving grass.

And I am going to dance and sing
And match the swallow on the wing,
And put my arms about each tree,
And kiss it as the sun does me.

And I am going to lie face down
Upon the hillside, far from town,
And hug it as the sunlight does,
And watch the pussy-willows fuzz.

S U N A N D F L O W E R S

I wish I was as big and bright
As is the sunlight: then I might
Hold all the hillside in my joy —
But I am just a little boy.

And I am only sweet and small
As are the wildflowers, that is all,
So mother says; and thus you see
The sun can get ahead of me.

Blow wind and rain! and sweep away
The snow and sleet of yesterday!
And bring the sunlight and the flowers
And all the laughing springtime hours.

FAIRIES

THERE's a little fairy who
Peeps from every drop of dew:
You can see him wink and shine
On the morning-glory vine,
Mischief in his eye of blue.

There's another fairy that
Rides upon the smallest gnat:
You can hear him tremolo
When the summer dusk falls slow,
Circling just above your hat.

And another one that sways
In the golden slanted rays
Of the sunlight where it floats:
Prosy people call them motes,
But they're fairies, father says.

But there's one that no one sees, —
Only, maybe, moths and bees; —
Who in lofts, where knot-holes are,
On the thin light of a star
Slides through crannied crevices.

FAIRIES

You may hear him sigh and sing
Near a May-fly's captured wing
In a spider-web close by:
See him with a moonbeam pry
Moonflowers open where they swing.

Down the garden-ways he goes
On a beetle's back, and blows
Sullen music from a horn:
Or you'll hear him when 't is morn
Buzzing bee-like by a rose.

And it's he who, when 't is night,
Twinkles with a firefly light;
Shakes a katydid tambourine;
Or amid the mossy green
Rasps his cricket-fiddle tight.

He it is who heaves the dome
Of the mushroom through the loam,
Plumper than a baby's thumb:
Or who taps a tinder drum
In the dead wood's honeycomb.

He's that Robin Goodfellow,
Or that Puck who, long ago,
Used to marshlight-lead astray
People in old Shakespeare's day —
That is, father told me so.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

He's the one that, in the Fall,
Frisks the dead leaves round us all;
Herds them; drives them wildly past,
Dancing with them just as fast
As a boy can throw a ball.

Wonder what *he* looks like.— Asked
Father once. He said he'd tasked
Mind and soul to find out, but
It was harder than a nut;
Just refused to be unmasked.

Though he thought, perhaps, he might
Find out some time, and delight
Telling me; but well he knew
He was like my questions, too,
Teasing and confusing quite.

THE LUBBER FIEND

IN the woods, not long ago,
Met with Robin Goodfellow;
First we heard his horse-like laugh
In an ivy-bush near by;
Then we saw him, like a calf,
Or a frisky colt, just fly —
Kicking high his frantic heels,
Squealing as a scared pig squeals.

Snorting, baaing, neighing too,
Through the woods he fairly flew;
Father followed him, but he
Couldn't catch him — long of limb
As a grasshopper, you see,
There's *no* man could capture *him*:
Then, besides, his color's green,
So he's rarely ever seen.

Often when you're in the woods,
Just a-walking with your moods,
And not thinking; listening how
Still it is, right near your head

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Breaks the bellow of a cow —
And you drop — scared nearly dead:
That's old Robin you can't see
'Cause he's colored like a tree.

And I've heard he calls and calls
In the woods for help, or falls,
Like an urchin, from a tree:
You jump up and shout and run —
But there's nothing there to see;
Just a snickering as of fun
In the thicket, or somewhere,
And you're madder than a hare.

Sometimes in dark woods a light
Flashes in your eyes, as bright
As a firefly after rain;
And your eyes are dazzled so
That you shut them — look again —
Nothing's there. *That's* Goodfellow,
With his jack-o'-lantern; see?
Hiding in some hollow tree.

These are pranks he plays on men
When he feels all right; but when
He is out of humor, well!
Better keep away! he'll *harm*:

THE LUBBER FIEND

Leads you with a heifer's bell,
Or horn-lantern, to some farm,
You suppose; but 't is n't! no!
Some old bog in which you go.

Sometimes he's called *Puck*, they say:
And it was the other day
Father read me from a book
That some people call him *Lob* —
One who haunts the ingle-nook,
Or sits humped upon the hob
Whistling up the chimney-flue
Till the kettle whistles too.

He's the Lubber Fiend, that sweeps
Ashes in your face and creeps
Under cracks when north winds howl;
Hides behind the closet door
And peeps at you, like an owl,
Bumps you shrieking on the floor;
And at night he rides a mare
Round your bed and everywhere.

And he teases dogs that doze
By the fire; and, I suppose,
They must *see* him in their dreams
When they snarl and glare o'erhead:

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And it's he, or so it seems,
Tumbles children out of bed,
Wakes the house and makes a fuss;
For he's awful mischievous.

That's what I heard *father* say,
And I *know* it's true. Some day
I'm a-going to be a boy
Just like Robin; romp and shout,
And kick up my heels for joy,
And scare people round about;
Just play tricks on every one. —
Don't you think it would be fun?

Take an old cow-horn, that's harsh
As a frog that haunts the marsh,
And when folks are in their beds
Blow it at the windowsill
Till they cover up their heads;
And when all again is still,
Hear them wonder what it was
That was making all that fuss.

Or I'll make a pumpkin face;
Light, and hide it in some place
Where are bushes; and when men
Come along I'll grunt and groan

THE LUBBER FIEND

Like an old pig in its pen;
When they run I'll throw a stone,
Or just vanish; and they'll say —
“ *What was that, I wonder? eh?* ”

It would be a *lot* of fun, —
Wouldn't it? to make folks run; —
Jumping at them from the dark
Like a big black dog, oh my!
It would be the *greatest* lark! —
Wonder why it is that I
Can't grow up *at once* — like you —
And do things I'd like to do?

TOADSTOOLS

I

ONCE when it had rained all night
And all day, the next day, why,
In our yard, a lot of white,
Dumpy toadstools grew close by
Our old peach tree: some were high,
Peak'd, like half-shut parasols;
Others round and low, like balls,
Little hollow balls; and I
Called my father to the tree:
And he said, "I tell you what:
Fairies have been here, you see.
This is just the kind of spot
Fairies *love* to live in. *Those*
Are their houses, I suppose.

II

"Yes, those surely are their huts!
Built of moon and mist and rain,
Such dim stuff as Elfland puts
In her buildings. — Come again,

TOADSTOOLS

And, like castles built in Spain,
They are nowhere.— But to-night,
Sliding down the moon's slim light,
Or snail-straddled, in a train
You may see the elves, perhaps,
Clad in gossamer garments, come;
Some in morning-glory caps,
And in tulip bonnets some.
If you watch, I have no doubt,
You will see them all come out.

III

“Long of leg as grasshoppers,
Or as katydids, oh, ho!
Here they'll sit; the bachelors
By the spinsters, row on row,
Kissing when the moon is low:
You may hear their kisses sound
Faint as raindrops on the ground,
Dropped by flow'rs that overflow,
Flow'rs whose heads the rain weighs down.
Or, perhaps, to twinkling tunes,
Tiny as their tiny town,
See them dance wild rigadoons
Creaked by crickets; singing, too,
Serenades as thin as dew.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

IV

“Or hobgoblins here may rise,
Snail-faced, spider-legged, you see;
Eyed with glowworm-glowing eyes,
Lidless slits of flame. . . . Maybe,
Gnarled of back and knobbed of knee,
Tadpole-paunched, you’ll see the gnomes
Waddle from their toadstool homes;
While the frogs industriously
Twang their big bass-violins,
And the screech-owl’s bagpipes shriek:
While their eyes, like points of pins,
Glitter, great-nosed beak to beak,
Here you’ll see them squat and blink
Till it’d freeze your blood, I think.” . . .

V

Won’t have any goblins here!
With their eyes like upright slits,
Parrot-nosed and flopped of ear,
And a grin that cracks and splits
Wide their faces, never quits,
Faces all one wart or wen!—
So I got a stick and then
Knocked those toadstools into bits.

TOADSTOOLS

And my father said, "Well! well!
Now you've spoiled your only chance —
It will never do to tell! —
To behold the fairies dance,
And those grinning goblins, too. —
Wonder *what* got into you!"

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

I

THERE's a boy who lives next door;
And this boy is just as bad
As a boy can be; and *poor!* —
He's *so* poor it makes me sad
When I see him. Out at knee;
And no shoes; and, more than that,
Hardly any shirt or hat. —
He's as poor as Poverty.

II

But I *like* him; yes, I do.
He can play 'most any game,
And tell fairy stories, too;
Funny stories, just the same
As my father does. And he
Told me one about a frog,
Living near a lake or bog,
Frog that married a bumblebee.

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

III

And another of Jumping Joan
And Hink Minx, the old witch that
Sits before the fire alone
Frying fat for her black cat.
And of Craney Crow; her dog
And her chicken.— But the best,
One I like more than the rest,
'S that one of the bee and frog.

IV

Well, the bumblebee would sing
All day long; and all the night
Sang the old frog; till the thing,
So folks said, was done in spite,
Just to keep the flowers awake:
One a rose, a brier-rose;
And the other, one of those
Lilies that grow in a lake.

V

All day long the bee would prod
At the rose and buzz and keep
Shaking it; it could n't nod,
Much less *ever* go to sleep:

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Humming to it, "Don't you hear?
I'm so happy! Can't you be
Just a little neighborly? —
Ain't my froggie just a dear?"

VI

And the frog all night would sing
To the water-lily; while
On the pad he'd sit or cling,
On his face an ear-wide smile,
Croaking, "Listen! have you heard
All about my bouncing bee? —
Don't you wish that you were she? —
I'm as happy as a bird!"

VII

Then the water-lily'd yawn,
And the rose would bat its eyes:
One would say, "It's nearly dawn.
Better sleep. So I advise."
And the other, "Jumping Jim!
That old frog's a wonder! made
Just for you. — Can't I persuade
You to sing your songs to him?"

VIII

Finally it got so bad
That the rose and lily agreed

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

They would fix them. Both were mad
And just dying to be freed
From this tuneful tyranny.
So the rose just took a thorn,
When the bee dropped in one morn,
Stabbed her; killed her dead, you see.

IX

That night by the yellow moon,
Sitting on the lily-pad,
Tuning up his old bassoon,
Did n't that old frog feel sad
When the lily told him! Cried
Fit to break one's heart; and, plunk!
In he plunged right there and sunk:
Drowned, committed suicide.

CERTAIN TRUTHS ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS

I

AND the boy that lives next door
Said to me one day, There's more
In those rhymes of Mother Goose
And those tales, I don't care whose, —
Arabian Nights or Grimm's, or, well,
Any one's, — than, I've no doubt,
You or I can ever tell,
Or can ever know about.

II

Why, there *is* a land, you know,
Where the world is so-and-so:
Where old Hick-a-Hack-a-more
Kicks the king right out his door
And sits on his throne and kills
Blackbirds as they fly from pies,
Pots them on the windowsills —
I ain't telling you no lies.

III

For I met an old man once —
 And *he* was n't any dunce —
 Who just told me he had been
 To that land and he had seen
 All those people: even met
 Handy Spandy in a shop;
 And old Doctor Foster, wet,
 Mad enough to make you hop.

IV

And he said *that* Miller, he
 Who once lived on River Dee,
 Told him that he was a wreck,
 Mind and body, knee and neck,
 Haunted by the memory of
 That old flea whose bones he crackt
 On the millstones. — It was tough!
 And it killed him; *it's a fact.*

V

And he'd met that fellow, too,
 Of St. Ives and all his crew,
 Wives and sacks and cats; and he
 Said it was a sight to see:

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Wives a-scolding and the cats
Fighting in the sacks; the kits
Scratching like so many rats,
Yowling, too, to give you fits.

VI

And he said that Old King Cole
Was a fraud upon the whole:
Never had a fiddler
That could fiddle anywhere
By the side of him; and joked
While he drank the vilest brew
From a cracked old bowl; and smoked
Worse tobacco; smiling, too.

VII

And he said he knows of one
Oldtime town, all over-run
With old beggars, that at dark
Loosen dogs that bark and bark
Till the people, gone to bed,
Throw out anything they've got
Just to keep the peace. He said,
"Ought n't they to all be shot?"

VIII

And he said that that old man
Clothed in leather was a ban

TRUTHS ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS

On the whole community:
He was simply miserly,
Filthy, too: economized
Clothes and washing that way: and
This man simply loathed, despised
Him, his grin, and leather-band.

IX

Cinderella, too: why, she
Was a slump; just naturally
Wouldn't work; and had big feet —
Could have seen them 'cross the street.
Didn't marry a Prince at all,
But the ashman. Never at Court
Or a ball! — *She* had her gall
To put that in her report!

X

Blue Beard was a *much wronged* man.
Think it was a well-laid plan
For his wife, her brothers there,
Just to kill him and to share
All his gold and silver. Then
Great Claus, too, was much abused. —
Think that old Hans Andersen
Might have *known* it. *He* was used.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

XI

Little Two Eyes *ate* her goat;
Was a glutton. If you'll note
All she did was eat and eat,
Thought of only bread and meat,
While her sisters, I've heard since,
Scrubbed and labored day and night;
But, it's true, *she* married a Prince —
Fell in love with her appetite.

XII

Jack the Giant-Killer; well!
He's the worst, the sorriest sell.
This man met him, and he said
He was just a bully; bled
Folks by blackmail. Every one
Was afraid of him. But he,
This old man, once saw *him run*
From a boy not big as me.

XIII

Rudest girls he ever saw
Were Bo Peep and Marjory Daw;
Always careless in their dress,
Given over to idleness.

TRUTHS ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS

Bobby Shafto and Boy Blue,
Worst boys in the world: the one,
Fishing when he ought not to;
The other sleeping in the sun.

XIV

Lots of other things he said
That, somehow, got out my head:
Something 'bout that girl contrary —
Never had a garden! — Mary;
And Miss Muffet — that big spider
Never did sit down beside her;
And that Curly Locks — the deuce! —
Never had a curl. . . . A few
Things he told of Mother Goose,
And I *know* they *all* are true.

BAD LUCK

ONCE a rabbit crossed my road
When I went to see my aunt;
And another time a toad
Hopped right in my way.— You can't
Kill toads, for that makes it rain,
And would spoil your day again.

But the rabbit—if I could
I'd have killed him. For one day
Once a boy he told me, "Should
A wild rabbit cross your way,
Look out for *bad* luck—that is,
If your fingers ain't cross-criss."

But if I had shot him dead
I'd not been unlucky; no;
And not fallen out of bed
That same night; or stumped my toe
Playing "I Spy"; nor the string
Broken when I went to swing.

BAD LUCK

Talk about bad luck! I guess
That old rabbit brought it. — Well;
Maudie had on her new dress,
And I pushed her, and she fell
In a creek-hole, where you're bound
To get wet — so Maudie found.

I — I pulled her out — that is,
Buddie helped me. — Bud's a boy
Who was fishing there. — And Liz,
Maud's old nurse, she took my toy,
My toy-whip, and — she was mad —
Whipped my legs and called me bad.

Then she said Maud might have drowned;
And the creek was full of "dumb
Pollywogs and snakes"; a sound
Whipping just might help me some:
Maybe Maud would catch a cold —
And — *my mother should be told.*

No, sir. I don't want to see
Any rabbits anyways
Cross my road. Why, gemenie! —
(That's a swear-word Maudie says) —
If I saw *one — only one*,
I would turn and run and run.

THE LAMPLIGHT CAMP

WHENEVER on the windowpane
I hear the fingers of the rain,
And in the old trees, near the door,
The wind that whispers more and more,
Bright in the light made by the lamp
I make myself a hunter's camp.

The shadows of the desk and chairs
Are trees and woods; the corners, lairs
Where wolves and wildcats lie in wait
For any one who walks too late;
Upon my knees with my toy-gun
I hunt and slaughter many a one.

And now I rescue Riding Hood
From the great Wolf within the wood;
Now little Silver Locks, who flies
From the Three Bears with angry eyes;
And many a little girl who dwells
In story books, as mother tells.

THE LAMPLIGHT CAMP

So up and down and all around
My wildwood camp I prowl or bound,
From corner unto corner till
I reach the door and windowsill,
Where Jack-o'-Lantern hides, I know,
Outside the lamplight's steady glow.

And he, the goblin-fiend, — my nurse
Once scared me with, when I was worse
Than naughty; would not go to sleep,
But keep awake; and cry and creep
Out of my bed, — the goblin black,
The foul fiend, Flibberty-Jibberty Jack.

And when I think perhaps that these
May catch me, on my father's knees
I climb and listen to the rain
And wind outside the windowpane,
And feel so safe with him that I
Go right to sleep, and never cry.

THE SCARECROW

MORE than cakes or anything
I like tales of shivering. —
Once a scarecrow on a hill
Tossed his ragged arms at me —
That was when I went to see
Folks that live at Fisherville.

And my father said, "You know,
When it's dark that old scarecrow
Gets down, rags and sticks and all,
And, like some old tramp, he goes,
Straw-wisps sticking from his toes,
Down the road, right past this wall.

"Wobble-legged and loose of arm,
Slow he shambles by the farm:
And if children are not good,
Snug in bed at eight o'clock,
On the window he will knock
With long knuckled hands of wood.

THE SCARECROW

“Then his empty face pressed flat
To the pane, his tattered hat
Flopping in the wind, he'll shake
His gaunt finger at them; and
Threaten them with head and hand,
And with teeth, too, like a rake.

“Then into the night he'll pack,
There to meet with bogie Jack,
Jack-o'-Lantern; and the two,
Arm in arm, will wander on,
Scaring folks until it's dawn,
As all goblin people do.

“You may see them through the pane
Passing in the night and rain:
When you hear the watch-dogs bark,
Then along the weedy side
Of some garden dim they glide,
Where they *grab* you in the dark.”

Sometime, when I can, for fun
I am going to take my gun;
Creep up on that hill and blow
That old scarecrow into bits—
Then he *can't* scare into fits
Any children more, I know.

BEETLE AND MOTH

I

THERE's a bug at night that goes
Drowsily down the garden ways;
Lumberingly above the rose,
And above the jasmine sprays;
Bumping, bungling, buzzing by,
Falling finally, to crawl
Underneath the rose and lie
Near its fairest bud. That's all.
And I ask my father why
This old bug goes by that way:
This is what he has to say:—

“That's old Parson Beetle, sonny;
He's in love with some rich flower;
After her and all her honey—
And he'll have them in an hour.
He is awkward, but, I say,
With the flowers he has a way;
And, I tell you, he's a power;
Never fails to get his flower:
He's a great old Beetle, sonny.”

II

Then again, when it is wet,
And we sit around the lamp,
On the screen, near which it's set,
Comes a fluttering, dim and damp,
Of white, woolly wings; and I
Go to see what's there and find
Something like a butterfly,
Beating at the window-blind.
And I ask my father why
This strange creature does that way:
This is what he has to say:—

“Lady Moth *that*; she's the fashion:
Falls in love with all bright things:
She has a consuming passion
For this light: will singe her wings.
Once it was a star, you know,—
That she loved.— *I told you so!*
Take her up. What lovely rings
On her scorched and dainty wings!—
It's a pity, but the fashion.”

OLD MAN RAIN

OLD Man Rain at the windowpane
Knocks and fumbles and knocks again:
His long-nailed fingers slip and strain:
Old Man Rain at the windowpane
Knocks all night but knocks in vain.
Old Man Rain.

Old Man Rain at the windowpane
Reels and shambles along the lane:
His old gray whiskers drip and drain:
Old Man Rain with fuddled brain
Reels and staggers like one insane.
Old Man Rain.

Old Man Rain is back again,
With old Mis' Wind at the windowpane,
Dancing there with her tattered train:
Her old shawl flaps as she whirls again
In the wildman dance and is torn in twain.
Old Mis' Wind and Old Man Rain.

THE LITTLE BOY, THE WIND, AND THE RAIN

I

SOMETIMES, when I'm gone to-bed,
And it's all dark in the room,
Seems I hear somebody tread
Heavy, rustling through the gloom:
And then something there goes "boom,"
Stumbling on the floor o'erhead;
And I cover eyes and ears:
Never dare to once look out,
But just cry till mother hears,
Says there's naught to cry about:—
"Old Mis' Wind is at her capers.
Shut your eyes and go to sleep.
She has got among those papers,
In the attic, with her sweep.
Shut your eyes and go to sleep."

II

Sometimes when the lamplight's flame
Flickers, fingers tap the pane;

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Knuckled fingers, just the same,
Rapping with long nails again:
Bony hands then seem to strain,
Pulling at the window-frame:
And I cry, "Who's there?" — And then
Sit bolt up in bed and call
Till my father drops his pen,
Saying to me from the hall:—
"Old Man Rain is at his nonsense.

Close your eyes and go to sleep.
Makes a lot of noise. My conscience!
What a fuss his fingers keep!
Close your eyes and go to sleep."

SOUNDS AND SIGHTS

I

OFTEN, when I wake at night,
I can hear the strangest sounds,
Stealthy noises, left and right,
As of some one going his rounds:
On the stairs there comes a crack
As if some one mounted there;
Then the door creaks; and the back
Settles of the rocking-chair,
As if some one had sat down. —
Then I get up in my gown;
Run to mother; hide my head;
Snuggle down by her in bed.

And she says to me, "My dear,
There is *nothing* here to fear:
All the noises that you hear
Are the old house and the weather,
Dry old weather,
Having a little talk together.
You just heard the old house *stretching*,
Waking up to have a chat:

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Seems to me that it is catching. —

Don't wake up again for that."

II

And again I wake at night,
And can see the queerest things: —
In the gas-jet's lowered light,
The tall mantle — with its rings
And its mirror — seems a face
With a monster eye and nose
And a mouth, — the fireplace, —
Making faces at me. Those
Chairs against the wall move out,
Limping, as if lame with gout:
And I'm scared as scared can be,
Call, till father comes to me.

And he says, "There's *nothing* there;
Nothing that could hurt or scare.
And that mantle and that chair —
Guess that they were only courting,
 Queerly courting,
While the other was cavorting.
You just *saw* what these were *thinking*;
 Longing there to hug and kiss:
Seems to me you caught them winking.
 But don't wake again for this."

KATYDIDS AND THE MOON

I

SUMMER evenings, when it's warm,
In the yard we sit and swing:
And it's better than a farm,
Watching how the fireflies swarm,
Listening to the crickets sing,
And the katydids that cry,
"Katy did n't! Katy did!"
In the trees and flowers hid.
So I ask my father, "Why?
What's the thing she did n't do?" —
For he told me that *he* knew: —

"Katy *did n't* like to worry;
But she *did* so like to talk;
Gossip of herself and talk;
Katy *did n't* like to hurry;
But she *did* so like to walk;
Saunter by herself and walk. —
How is that now for a story?"

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

II

And one night when it was fine,
And the moon peeped through the trees;
And the scented jessamine vine
Swung its blossoms in the breeze,
Full of sleeping honeybees:
"That's Old Sister Moon," he said.
"She's a perfect simpleton;
Scared to death of Old Man Sun:
All day long she hides her head."
And I asked my father *why*,
And he made me this reply:—

"Sister Moon's old eyes are weary;
Her old eyes are *very* weak;
Poor and old and worn and weak:
And the old Sun, with his cheery
Looks, just makes them leak and leak,
Like an old can leak and leak.
That's the reason why, my dearie."

TOPSY TURVY

TOPSY TURVY is her name;
She's a curiosity:

Never sees the world the same
As it seems to you and me.
" *All* the world is upside down,"
So she says; then, with a frown,
"If it's not it *ought* to be."
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

Takes you to some old wood pool,
Or some well to prove she's right:
" *There's* the real world, you fool!
Something's wrong with people's sight.
There's the sky, the clouds, the wood.
There you see them as you should.
If you don't it's out of spite."
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

"You are walking on your heads,
And don't know it; but it's true.
You don't lie down *in* your beds,
But your beds lie down on you;

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

You are under them. The sun,
Moon, and stars are, every one,
Shining underneath you too.”
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

“ Seems that no one else can see
As I see it. It's a shame,
Or your own perversity.
But, good Lord! *I*'m not to blame.
Don't know what *you* miss, you don't,
By not seeing things you won't. —
My! how fine they look to me!”
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

Then she runs away and hides
By a creek and looks for hours,
In the water where it slides,
At herself, the trees and flowers,
Sun and skies and clouds, and if
You just laugh, she gives a sniff,
Shakes her head and glares and glowers. —
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

LITTLE GIRLIE GOOD ENOUGH

LITTLE Girlie Good Enough
Lives right there across the street;
Neater than a powder-puff,
Yes she is, and just as sweet:
Bows and ribbons on her hair,
And her frock *just so*. Declare,
Looks just like a doll, she does;
Best girl that there ever was.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never answers people back.
Spick and span from shoe to cuff,
Brighter than a brand new tack.
Knows her lessons every day;
Never loiters on her way:
Teeth like two clean rows of pearls.
She's the very best of girls.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never goes with shoes untied;
Never, never's rude or rough;
She's her parents' joy and pride.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Never cries for candy, nor
For the things not good for her:
Hair is always combed and curled.
She's the best girl in the world.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never gets her dresses soiled;
Never plays with mud or stuff;
And her face looks like it's oiled
It's so clean and shiny. She
Never's even out at knee;
Stockings perfect, always so.
She's the best girl that I know.

Little Girlie Good Enough—
Wish I was as good as she!
Never flies into a huff,
Makes a scene like you or me.
Only speaks when spoken to;
Never talks like me and you
When there's company to tea.
She's a *good* girl; yes sir-ee.

Little Girlie Good Enough—
I don't *like* you, never could.
Think you're nothing but a muff,
And that you are far *too* good.

LITTLE GIRLIE GOOD ENOUGH

Never kissed a boy! — oh my!
Never played the game Hi Spy,
Lost the Handkerchief, or such!
You're too good to even touch.

Little Girlie Good Enough,
Some one's going to do for you;
Going to treat you good and tough,
Spatter you from head to shoe;
Pull your hair and scratch your face,
Send you home in great disgrace;
Show you you're not up to snuff,
Little Girlie Good Enough.

FROGS AT NIGHT

I HEARD the toads and frogs last night
When snug in bed, and all was still;
I lay and listened there until
It seemed a church where one, with might,
Was preaching high and very shrill:

"The will of God!

The will of God!"

To which a voice, below the hill,
Basso-profundo'd deep, "The will!"

"The will of God!

The will of God!"

"The will! The will!"

They croaked and chorused hoarse or shrill.

It made me sleepy; sleepier
Than any sermon ever heard:
And so I turned upon my ear
And went to-sleep and never stirred:
But in my sleep I seemed to hear:

"The word of God!

The word of God!"

FROGS AT NIGHT

Chanted and quavered, chirped and purred,
To which one deep voice croaked, "The word!"

"The word of God!

The word of God!"

"The word! The word!"

And I slept on and never stirred.

RAGAMUFFIN

I

THERE's a boy that you must know,
Always ragged, dirty too;
Just a wretched sight and show —
Worst boy that I ever knew;
Always hitting other boys
Smaller than himself. Annoys
People, too, by throwing stones.
Breaks *more* windows! that's his *game*. —
Some one *ought* to break *his* bones. —
Ragamuffin is his name.

Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day some one 'll knock the stuffin'
Out of you and then, perhaps,
You won't bully little chaps.

II

Never goes to school, but plays
Hookey *all* the time. — His hat
Slouched like some old drunken bat
Reeling through the evening haze,

RAGAMUFFIN

Here he loafs and tries to scare
Little girls; yes, pulls their hair,
While he mouths at them and jeers:
Chews tobacco, too, the same
As these ragged grasshoppers. —
Ragamuffin is his name.

Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day you'll go home a-snuffin':
Some big brother's going to fix
You for all your loafer tricks.

III

And at night he comes around,
Prying in the windows when
Children are alone: and then
Knocks and makes a dreadful sound,
Like a robber getting in;
Scares them till it is a sin,
Looking fierce as robbers do,
Cursing till it is a shame:
It would even frighten *you*. —
Ragamuffin is his name.

Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
You had better quit your bluffin';
Watchman sure will cross your trail,
Catch and lock you up in jail.

IV

But the *worst* thing that he does,
So I think, is poking fun
At poor beggars; never a one
Beggarly or villanous
As himself is. And he laughs,
Fit to kill, and apes and chaffs
Every cripple: lies in wait
Just to mock: pretends he's lame:
Jeers then, "*Say! why ain't you straight?*" —
Ragamuffin is his name.

Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day you will get a cuffin';
Man will kill *you* with a crutch —
Hey! we would n't miss you much.

THE JACK-O'-LANTERN

LAST night it was Hallowe'en.
Darkest night I've ever seen.
And the boy next door, I thought,
Would be glad to know of this
Jack-o'-lantern father brought
Home from Indianapolis.

And he *was* glad. Borrowed it.
Put a candle in and lit;
Hid among the weeds out there
In the side lot near the street.
I could see it, eyes aglare,
Mouth and nose red slits of heat.

My! but it looked scary! He
Perched an old hat on it, see?
Like some hat a scarecrow has,
Battered, tattered all around;
And he fanned long arms of grass
Up and down above the ground.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

First an Irish woman, shawled,
With a basket, saw it; bawled
For her Saints and wept and cried,
“Is it you, Pat? Och! I knew
He would git you whin you died!
'Faith! there's little change in you!”

Then the candle sputtered, flared,
And went out; and on she fared,
Muttering to herself. When lit,
No one came for longest while.
Then a man passed; looked at it;
On his face a knowing smile.

Then it scared a colored girl
Into fits. She gave a whirl
And a scream and ran and ran —
Thought Old Nick had hold her skin;
And she ran into a man,
P'liceman, and *he* run her in.

But what pleased me most was that
It made one boy lose his hat;
A big fool who thinks he's smart,
Bragg about the boys he beat:
Knew he'd run right from the start:
Biggest coward on the street.

THE JACK-O'-LANTERN

Then a crowd of girls and boys
Gathered with a lot of noise.
When they saw the lantern, well!
They just took a hand: they thought
That they had *him* when he fell;
But he turned on them and fought.

He just took that lantern's stick,
Laid about him hard and quick,
And they yelled and ran away.
Then he brought me all he had
Of my lantern. And, I say,
Could have *cried* I was so mad.

OLD JACK FROST

LAST night we were kept awake.
Could n't sleep for Old Jack Frost;
Wandering round like some old ghost.
Gave the door an awful shake;
Knocked against my bed's brass post.
Last night we were kept awake.

Could n't sleep he made such noise;
Rapped and tapped and prowled around.
Once he made a snapping sound
Just like that of breaking toys. —
You'd been scared, too, I'll be bound.
Could n't sleep he made such noise.

All was dark and very still,
When, right at the window, "bing,"
Came a rap that made me sing,
"Mother, I'm afraid!" until
Mother fussed like everything.
All was dark and very still.

OLD JACK FROST

"Old Jack Frost is raising Ned.
And to-morrow, wish to state,
We'll get even sure as fate;
Cure him of his tricks," she said;
"Start a fire in the grate.
Old Jack Frost is raising Ned."

Then I heard my father's voice:
"You just let Jack Frost alone.
He's good friends, you should have known,
With Old Santa. Little boys
Are not scared of him, my son."
Then I heard my father's voice.

So I went to sleep again:
Let him bang the furniture
All he cared to. I was sure
I'd get even; *that* was plain:
Old Man Fire would be *his* cure.
So I went to sleep again.

Once he rattled at my mug
Where was water: then he crept
Round the room and softly stepped
Here and there upon the rug;
Felt his breath, but I just slept.
Once he rattled at my mug.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Well, you should have seen the things
That he painted on the panes
When 't was morning: towns and trains;
Flowers and fairies; ropes and rings;
Stars and ribboned weather-vanes.
Well, you should have seen the things!

I just shouted when I saw.
Called to father: "Just look here!
Old Jack Frost is *such* a dear!
Wish he'd show me how to draw.
I'd be good for one whole year."
I just shouted when I saw.

THE POND

AND I told the boy next door
What Jack Frost had done; and he
Said, "*Ah shucks! that's nothing; see?*
I have seen all that before.
You just come along with me;
I will show you something more."

And he took me to a lot
Where there was a shallow pool;
And this pool was frozen; full
Of the slickest ice. I got
On it, but he said, "You fool!
It will break. You'd better not."

And right then it broke. O my!
In I went above my knees.
Thought that I would surely freeze.
Old Jack Frost just caught me by
Both my legs; began to squeeze;
And then I began to cry.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

I just helloed, and the boy
Helloed too; until a man,
With a dinner-pail or can,
Heard us, and cried out, "Ahoy!
What've you run into?" — Then ran
Till he got there, to our joy.

He just took me round the waist,
Lifted me as easy; so;
Then he said, "I think, by Joe!
You two boys were both in haste
To go skating, don't you know?
Better wait till summer's chased.

"Where you live, eh?" — And I told. —
"Well, we'll have to hurry. Come.
Old Jack Frost has nipped my thumb.
I shall have an awful cold;
And suppose that you'll have some.
Can't be helped. Hope *Ma* won't scold.

"My! but you're a mighty fine
Little boy! Remind me of
One at home — my own — I love.
Eyes just like yours — clear as wine. —
There now! I have lost my glove. —
You're just like that boy of mine.

THE POND

“Wish he knew you. Got blue eyes
Same as yours and same brown hair.
But he’s crippled. Has a chair
Where he sits all day, or lies.
‘He’s our only love and care’ —
So his mother says, then cries.

“Here’s your street and here’s your home.
Run ’long to your mother. Then —
I’ll be seeing you again.
So long. Hope the day will come
My boy’ll be like you young men,
Straight and strong and mettlesome.”

Then he went and, man alive!
I felt sorrier for that man
With his battered dinner-can,
And his crippled boy, than I’ve
Ever felt. And I began
Crying; and then made a dive

For the back-door. Won’t forget
All the fuss *there*: first they told
Mother, and — how she did scold!
Father said, “This getting wet
Will, I’m sure, give you a cold.” —
But I have n’t had it yet.

THE CHARCOAL MAN

ONCE a charcoal wagon passed,
And an old black charcoalman,
"Blacker than a midnight blast,"
Mother said. And he began
Crying, "Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal."
And the boys they mocked him, too,
Just the same as parrots do:
"Charcoal! Charcoal!
Blacker than a cellar hole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!"

But he never looked at them,
Only cracked his blacksnake whip,
Sucking at his old pipe-stem,
Not much blacker than his lip:
Crying, "Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!"
And the boys they mimicked him
While he rode on black and grim:

THE CHARCOAL MAN

“Charcoal! Charcoal!
Blacker than your old pipe’s bowl!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!”

Then he turned and shook his head
With a sort o’ grimy smile;
“Wish you had my job,” he said;
“Come and try it for a while,
Crying, ‘Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!’”
But the boys kept up the fun
Crying louder, every one,
“Charcoal! Charcoal!
Slower than an old black mole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!”

Down he got then from his team,
In his old patched coat and hat,
Rags and dirt at every seam,
Blacker than our old black cat:
Crying, “Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!”

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And the boys they stood far off,
Mocking him with gibe and scoff:
"Charcoal! Charcoal!
Leaner than an old bean pole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!"

I felt sorry for him then:
And my mother called him in:
Bought a boxful. Gentlemen!
Ought to've seen him laugh and grin,
Crying, "Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!"
And the boys they danced and laughed,
Pleased as he was, while they chaffed:
"Charcoal! Charcoal!
Shovel it and let it roll!"
And he answered them as droll:
"Charcoal! Charcoal!
Made enough to pay my toll.
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Run and tell your mothers, boys,
Here's the place to buy your choice
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Best they ever bought or stole.
Charcoal! Charcoal!"

THE CHARCOAL MAN

Bring your barrels here to fill!
You can bring them if you will!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Help along a needy soul!
Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!"

OLD SIS SNOW

OLD Sis Snow, with hair ablow,
Down the road now see her go!
Her old gown pulled back and pinned
Round her legs by Wild-boy Wind —
Ought n't he to just be skinned? —
Hear her shriek, now high, now low,
Tangled in her hair! my oh! —
Is n't she a crazy show?
Old Sis Snow!

Old Sis Snow now to and fro
Ramps and wrestles and hollos "Whoa!"
Sticks her long white fingers through
Every crack and cranny too,
Reaching after me and you:
Cold! and look how fast they grow!
Ghostly in the lamplight's glow,
Threatening you from head to toe! —
Old Sis Snow!

OLD SIS SNOW

Old Sis Snow! now you go slow!
You'll get tired enough, I know:
Wild-boy Wind will drag you down;
Round your ears will tear your gown;
Strew its rags through field and town. —
Now he's at it, blow on blow,
Hitting hard as any hoe. —
Hear them how they knock and throw!
Wild-boy Wind and Old Sis Snow!

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

HAD a birthday yesterday.
First one for, I think, a year.
Won't have one again, they say,
Till another year is here.
Funny, don't you think so? I
Can't just understand now why.

Anyhow my birthday came;
And I had, oh! lots of things—
Birthday gifts I just can't name,
Even count them: toys and rings;
Hoops and books and hats. Indeed,
Everything that I *don't* need.

What I wanted wasn't *suits*;
Wooden toys and "Wonderland";
But a hoe to dig up roots;
And a spade to shovel sand;
Rake to rake where father said
He has made a flower-bed.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

But I didn't get them; and
Didn't get a box of paints,
Which I wanted. I raised sand,
Till my mother said, "My saints!
If you don't behave yourself,
Party'll be laid on the shelf."

So I did behave, and played
With the little girls and boys,
Who just stayed and stayed and stayed,
Played with me and with my toys;
Broke some, too; but, never mind,
Had the best time of its kind.

Had the dinner then. I bet
Y' never saw a finer sight.
A big birthday cake was set,
Thick with icing, round and white,
In the centre of the table,
Looking all that it was able.

On it four pink candles burned:
And we had a lot of fun
When a little girl there turned,
Blew them out,—yes, every one,—
And I kissed her for it—yes—
And she liked it, too, I guess.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

When I saw my father, why,
All the children then were gone;
Only child around was I.
I was playing on the lawn
By myself when father came,
And he kissed me just the same.

And I asked my father *where*
Do the birthdays come from, while
He sat in his rocking-chair,
Looking at me with a smile.
Then I asked him *where they go*
When they're gone. He did n't know.

SANTA CLAUS

WHEN my mother is n't here,
And I just *won't* go to bed,
And it's cold outside and near
Christmas; and the kitchen-shed
'S covered thick with frost and snow;
Then my nurse she says, "Oh! oh!
Better get to bed! — My Laws!
Think I hear Old Santa Claus!"

Then I hurry; never kick,
Squirm or cry or anything:
But jump into bed right quick:
'Fraid to look around; and cling
Fast to nurse; and close my eyes
Tight: she looking just as wise!
Scared, too, don't you know? *because*
She just heard Old Santa Claus.

Why in goodness I'm afraid
I don't know. For Santa's good,
So they say, and brings much aid
To all folks. It's understood

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Specially to girls and boys,
Christmas-trees and cakes and toys;
But there *must* be some good cause
Makes one 'fraid of Santa Claus.

It's his whiskers, I suppose;
Gray and big about his chin,
Where you just can see his nose
And his eyes, each like a pin:
And his clothes all made of hair
Twinkling thick with frost. Declare
If I saw him I'd have *cause*
To be scared of Santa Claus.

One night, — week from Christmas, — I
Looked out through the window-pane;
And right in our back-yard, why,
Some one walked in wind and rain,
Swishing, splashing with a whip.
Didn't I just hop and skip
Into bed? because, because
Guess it was Old Santa Claus.

And I am all shivery
When I wake up winter nights,
And it's dark and I can't see,
And the black wind fights and fights

SANTA CLAUS

Round the chimney; then right quick
Under cover my head I stick,
Crying, "Mother! wake up! 'cause
Think I hear Old Santa Claus!"

FORERUNNERS

'T IS n't long till Christmas now.

First thing that you 'll know, *it's here.*
Nurse can tell it, don't know how,
By the smell o' th' atmosphere,
Shivery and never clear.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

'T is n't long till Christmas now.
Boy next door, he says he knows
By the ice at morning; *wow!*
And the way the old wind blows,
And the way it snows and snows.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

'T is n't long till Christmas now.
Cook, she knows it by her aches,
So she says, or, anyhow,
By the many cakes she bakes,
Fruit-cakes, nut- and pepper-cakes.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

FORERUNNERS

'Tis n't long till Christmas now.
And *I* know it, yes, I do,
By the rooms they won't allow
Me to go in; closets, too,
They keep locked — I don't know who.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.

'Tis n't long till Christmas now.
Father says he knows it by
Money and his purse; and how
Much it takes for things, oh my!
Little boys come mighty high.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.

'Tis n't long till Christmas now.
Mother knows it, she declares,
By the sounds at night; the row
In the parlor, on the stairs —
Santa carrying in his wares.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

CHRISTMAS is just one week off,
And Old Santa's in the house;
In the attic heard a cough
Th' other day when not a mouse
Nor a rat, *I know*, was there.
Mother said, "You'd better be
Good, or else, I do declare!
There won't *be* a Christmas-tree."

Christmas is next week. And I'm
So excited!—In the night
Hardly ever sleep. One time
Woke and heard strange footsteps, right
In the hall, go down the stair;
When I cried to mother, she
Said, "Lie down, now! I declare
If you don't—no Christmas-tree."

Yes; next week is Christmas. And
I heard some one laughing sure,
Low, half smothered by a hand,
In the parlor where the door

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

'S always locked and, my! my hair
Fairly crept. And suddenly
Heard a hoarse voice say, "Take care!
Or you'll get no Christmas-tree."

Mother was a-lying down;
'T was n't she. And then the cook
And my nurse had gone in town.
Father, he was at a book. —
Must have been Old Santa there
Just a-lying low to see
If I'm good or — I declare! —
Trimming up my Christmas-tree.

One night, huh! the kitchen door
Banged wide open. 'T was n't wind.
And three knocks, or was it four?
Shook the window. — I just skinned
Out of there and up the stair
Where my mother was; and she
Smiled, "'T was Santa, I'll declare!
Bringing in your Christmas-tree."

And I never pout or cry
When I have to go to bed;
Just get in my gown and lie
Quiet; listening for the tread

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Of a foot upon the stair,
Or a voice — it seems to me
Santa's — saying, "I declare,
It's a *lovely* Christmas-tree!"

Every one just walks the chalk
Now it's near to Christmas. Yes,
I'm as careful in my talk
As a boy could be, I guess:
"For Old Santa's everywhere,"
Mother says mysteriously,
"And, unless you're *good*, 'declare
You won't have a Christmas-tree."

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHRISTMAS Eve is here at last.
And I'm happy as can be.

Going to have a Christmas-tree,
And more toys than any past
Christmas saw or ever had, —
So my mother says, — for me.
And I'm glad, am just as glad
As a little boy can be.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Christmas Eve is here at last.
And I'm going to-bed to-night
Early; when it's candlelight:
Christmas Day can't come too fast. —
I'll not go to-sleep, I think,
But be wide awake when, right
Here, Old Santa, with a wink,
Down the chimney comes to-night.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Christmas Eve is here at last.
And the dining-room and hall,
Parlor too, I guess, and wall,

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

All are hung with holly; massed
With old mistletoe. A smell
Sniffs of cedar over all.
Every minute goes the bell;
Parcels pack and pile the hall.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Christmas Eve is here at last.
And it has begun to snow.
Oh! I'm so excited! oh!
Windows rattle and the blast
Shakes and mutters at the door.
But *that*'s not the wind I know;
I have heard him there before —
Santa Claus all furred with snow.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Christmas Eve is here at last.
How the folks go hurrying by;
I can see the snowflakes fly
By my window; whirling past
Everywhere; and our front yard
'S covered white: and my! oh my!
Hear the bells that jingle hard!
Must be Santa sleighing by.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve is here at last.
Tell you what I'm going to do,
Hang my stockings up — yes, *two!*
My *two* stockings; for, I asked
Mother and she said I might.
Then I'll watch, and cry, "*That you,*
Santa?" — when he comes to-night —
"Hello, Santa! Howdy do!
Christmas Eve is here at last."

NOTHING TO DO

DON'T know what to do to-day.
Got *so* many things to do
I can't do them. *Want* to play,
But my toys are all too new —
I don't *like* to play with them:
Blocks and paints and dogs and guns;
Watch that winds up by the stem;
And a train of cars that runs
Round a track and far away.
Don't know what to do to-day.

Don't know what to do to-day.
Whether just to stand and look
At my Christmas-tree, or stay
Looking at my picture-book
Full of fairy stories; or
Ask to have them read to me;
Or to bother mother for
Something off the Christmas-tree:
I don't know and I can't say —
Don't know *what* to do to-day.

NOTHING TO DO

Don't know what to do to-day.
Never can make up my mind.
I *could* take my new red sleigh
And go sleighing on behind
Some old wagon on the snow
As the other children do:
But, you see, I *just don't know!*
There's my brand new wagon, too;
It 'd be lonesome, me away. —
Don't know *what* to do to-day.

Don't know what to do to-day.
There's my fine new rocking-horse,
Long of tail and dapple-gray,
I *might* ride on him of course:
But my new velocipede —
What would *it* do then? or what
Would that "fiery, untamed steed,"
That I almost had forgot,
Hobbyhorse just think or say? —
Don't know what to do to-day.

Don't know what to do to-day.
But I know what I *could* do:
I could make my donkey bray
By just twisting round a screw

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

In his stomach, and that's all;
I might make my rooster crow;
And my big mechanical doll
Play his music-box; and, oh!
I could make my old hen lay. —
That's what I could do to-day.

“Don't know what to do to-day!”
Mother says. “Well, I suppose,
Better put your toys away.
You've too many, heaven knows!
Don't know what Old Santa meant
Bringing you a toy-store. You
Have too much, that's evident;
Give some to those children who
Haven't toys with which to play. —
That's what you could do to-day.

“Don't know what to do to-day? —
That's just what you *could* do! take
Lot of these new toys, you say
You won't play with, and just make
Christmas visits to the poor:
Little boys and girls Old Kris
Skipped; just made his old sleigh soar
O'er their chimneys; seemed to miss
Every one along his way. —
That's what you could do to-day.”

NOTHING TO DO

That's what I could do to-day.
Then I helped her put some things,
Toys and cakes and fruit, away;
Parceled up and wrapped with strings,
In a basket. Then we went —
And it was a lot of fun! —
To an alley-tenement:
Made them happy, every one.
It was better than a play. —
That was what I did to-day.

OLD MAN WINTER

THERE is nothing at all to do to-day.
I can't go out and run and play;
For it's raining and snowing and sleeting, too;
And Old Man Winter *he* is to blame.
And I just sit here and think it a shame.
There is nothing at all to do.

I stand or sit at the windowpane,
And look at the snow and look at the rain,
And the old dead leaves go flying by;
For Wild Man Wind is making a din;
And mother says that it is a sin:
And I'm almost ready to cry.

I *can't* go out in the wind and wet,
And it's a long time yet till the table's set,
And we are ready for toast and tea:
It's a long time too till the lamp is lit,
And my father's home and I can sit,
And he can read to me.

OLD MAN WINTER

And I *can not* play or do a thing;
And there's *no one* coming visiting,
For it's storming more and more:
But now and then there's a rat-tat-tat,
And I ask my mother *what is that*,
And she says, "The wind at the door."

And she says, "Now *what* can the Old Wind
want

A-knocking there with his knuckles gaunt?
You can hear his old hat dripping rain,
And his ragged cloak that flaps and slaps. —
Why, I guess he's looking for little chaps,
To give them a cold again.

"You can see him there by the water-spout
With Old Man Rain just flapping about,
His long sharp nose an icicle,
And his fingers too; and his old, wild eyes
Small and gray as the winter skies,
Or ice in a winter well."

And then she comes to my side and sits
And says, "Just listen how he hits!
But *he* can't get in and *you* can't get out:
And by and by he'll be out of breath,
And grumble and growl himself to death,
Or leave with a mighty shout."

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Right then there comes a step on the stair,
And I run to see; and my father's there;
With snow and rain on his coat and hat.
Now Old Man Winter can break his cane,
Can crack his cane on the windowpane —
I don't care a rap for that.

For my father's home! — "It's a wild old
night.

The Wind and the Snow are having a fight,"
He says, "and are mauling each other around:
First Old Man Snow rips out a curse;
Then Wild Man Wind says something worse;
Then both are on the ground.

"And Old Man Snow is underneath,
And he snarls like a wolf and shows his teeth,
While Wild Man Wind just hits and hits:
Then round they wrestle; and Old Snow reels,
His long wild whiskers around his heels,
And his gray cloak torn in bits.

"And before you know it he's up with a bound,
And it's Wild Man Wind that hits the ground,
And Old Man Snow holds down his arm:
You can see them there by the window-light,
Wrangling, wrestling out in the night,
Out in the night and storm."

OLD MAN WINTER

Then I look and see how the wind and snow
Just fight it out and thrash and blow;
Their windy rags through the ghostly black
Go whistling past the windowpane:
Then I run to the fire and lamp again,
And reach a book from the rack.

The lamp is lit, and my father's knee
And the fairy tales are ready for me:
And I sit, and he holds me by the hand:
Now Wild Man Wind and Old Man Snow
Can do their worst and bluster and blow,
I am far in Fairyland.

A LONG, LONG WAY

I

IT's a long, long way to the country, where
 I wade and splash in the creek;
And a long, long way to the Ferncreek Fair,
 The Fair where I was last week:
It's a long, long way to the end of the world,
 Where the sun blows out his beams;
But the way is short, in your warm bed curled,
 To the old, old Land of Dreams.

II

It's a long, long way to go up stairs
 When you're down in the yard below;
And a long, long way where no boy cares
 To ever want to go:
It's a long, long way to the world's far end,
 Where the stars sit down with God;
But the way is short, so I comprehend,
 To the wonderful Land of Nod.

A LONG, LONG WAY

III

It's a long, long way when you have to be
dressed,

When you'd very much rather play;
And a long, long way, let it be confessed,
To leave where you'd rather stay:
It's a long, long way to the end of the Earth,
Where the night rolls dark and deep;
But the way is short, in your cozy berth,
To the far, far Land of Sleep.

IV

It's a short, short way when you go to school,
But a long, long way back home;
And my teacher says you can find a fool
No matter where you roam:
It's a long, long way, so my father says,
Till *some* folks see a jest;
But the longest way of all the ways
Is the way to the Land of Rest.

TOMBOY

THERE's a little girl I know
And we call her So-and-So.
She is neither good nor bad —
Good enough for me although! —
Never saw a girl that had
More *real* life in her, or more
Of what people christen *go*;
Pretty too as she is poor.

So-and-So is not her name
But her nickname. She's to blame
For it — being named that way:
For she often starts some game,
And, when asked what 't is we play,
She just answers, "I don't know.
It's a good game just the same;
And I call it So-and-So."

Other girls don't like her, no;
Just because she's So-and-So;
Call her names like Tomboy, or
Wildcat, just as girls will do

T O M B O Y

When a girl is popular
With the boys and does n't care
Much for girls, and 's pretty, too,
With blue eyes and golden hair.

I would give most anything
Just to hear her laugh and sing,
Dance, too. She is funnier
Than a circus and its ring;
And no boy can out-run her,
Or out-dare her. And, oh my!
You should see her in a swing,
Streaking it into the sky!

She's the girl that suits *me*; yes,
And suits *all* the boys, I guess:
Never backward; always in
For some picnic, more or less.
Take your top and wind and spin;
Or play marbles; fly a kite;
Or, if needs be, in a mess
She can just pitch in and fight.

Let some big boy *dare* to touch,
Bully some small boy or such,
She's right at him saying, "*You*
Great big coward! need a crutch

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

By the time that I get through!" —
And she's bright at school, although
She don't have to study much
As some other girls I know.

Once two weeks went by and she
Had just disappeared; you see
Had n't come to play or call:
She was sick apparently;
And we made it up that all —
All the boys, or *some*, should go
And find out what it could be,
And report on So-and-So.

Well, what do you think! Declare,
When we rang the door-bell, there
At the door she stood as bright,
Brighter ev'n, with nice combed hair,
In an apron spotless white:
And she smiled and seemed *so* glad:
But about her was an air
Of importance she'd not had.

Was the same yet not the same.
And when I began to blame,
She just stopped me with a bow,
Saying, "Boys, I've changed my name.

T O M B O Y

I've a little brother now —
Baby-brother. Don't you know?
Takes the place of every game,
And I call *him* So-and-So."

THE BOY ON THE FARM

OUT in Oldham County once
Met a boy who showed me how
He could milk an old red cow. —
Yes; he was n't any dunce. —
Put me on an old gray mare;
Rode me to an old mill, where
They were grinding corn. He filled
A big sack and then we sat
By the dam and there he killed
A black snake, as long as that.

Then he showed me how to row
In an old flat boat that leaked,
Where the dam was stained and streaked
With big lilies, white as snow.
Then he showed me how to swim
Jumping from a sycamore limb:
While he splashed around, why, I
Waded up and down the shore;
Then, when he was dressed and dry,
Mounted that old mare once more.

THE BOY ON THE FARM

And he took the bag of meal —
“That’s for corn-cakes,” so he said:
“And it makes the *grandest* bread! —
Cornbread. Ain’t it heavy? Feel.”
And he slung it on across
That old mare, who, with a toss
Of her tail, turned right for home.
On the way he showed me where
Hornets had their nest, like some
Foot-ball made of paper there.

And he showed me how to catch
Bumblebees and how to keep
Them from stinging; made a leap,
Caught one in a clover-patch;
And he showed me then where they
Stow their honey-bags away:
Caught two bees and was n’t stung:
Took one’s bag and gave it me,
And I put it on my tongue:
Sweet! yes sir, and smelt of bee.

Then he caught a locust; took
Its two wings, like some queer toy’s;
Showed me how it made its noise;
Held it up and shook and shook

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Till it rattled. And that night
Showed me, with a lantern light,
How the pond-toads puffed their throats,
Each one like a toy-balloon,
Swelling, piping reedy notes,
Making music for the moon.

No; *he* was n't any dunce;
No, sir. Why, he'd tell the time
By the sun, he could. And *climb!*
Climbed a great tall poplar once
Hundred feet or more, and straight
As the flag-pole at our gate.
When he's up there, took his hat,
Tossed it up and cried, "Hurrah!"
Bet you *no* man could do that;
No! not even my own Pa.

Lose him? Why, he'd tell his way
In the darkest night, he could;
In the deepest, darkest wood,
By the stars, he said: by day
Knew it by these lichens on
Trunks of trees. — When I am grown
He's a-going to teach me *all* —
Everything he knows; and I'm
Going there again this Fall —
Live there, may be, all the time.

OLD SNAKE-DOCTOR

I

ONCE I found an ant-lion's hole
And an ant-lion in it: nippers
Like a pair of rusty clippers.
And I saw a red ant roll
In its pit, and, quick as Ned,
This old ant-lion fanged its head,
Held it till the ant was dead.

II

And I told my father: he
Smiled and said, "*He* beats the dickens,
With his pinchers; even chickens
Have n't his voracity. —
Think now what he would have done
Had *you* been an ant, my son,
Fallen in that pit like one.

III

"Daniel in the lion's den! —
Guess you'd come home good and gory.
But now here's another story: —
You should see these ant-lions when

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

They have wings; and, blue and green,
Ponds and pools they fly between:
Prettiest things *I*'ve ever seen.

IV

"Look just like the dragonflies;
And perhaps they *are* snake-feeders;
Name you 'll never find in Readers
Read at school: but, I surmise,
Dragonflies are not the same
As these old snake-doctors; name
For which *I* am not to blame.

V

"Who's to blame then? If it's not
I or, say, the dictionary, —
Since we two seem *so* contráry, —
Must be that old ant-lion what
Can't content itself, that's plain,
With its bug-estate; remain
Just a bug in sun and rain.

VI

"Has to get himself new clothes!
Gauzy wings that shine and glitter;
Something that *he* thinks is fitter
His profession, I suppose.

OLD SNAKE-DOCTOR

Doctoring things, like water-snakes;
Finery that often takes
Eyes of hungry ducks and drakes:

VII

“ And of fishes, too, the fool.
Who his coat so bright and brassy,
Mirrored in the waters glassy,
Leap for, drag into the pool. —
Old snake-doctor, flaunt your fill!
Feed the snakes or cure or kill —
In the end *you* pay the bill.”

THE DEVIL'S RACE-HORSE

DEVIL'S Race-Horse seems to me
Strangest thing I ever saw:
Up in our old maple-tree
They're at home; stand rearingly,
Lean of neck and long of claw.
Strangest thing I ever saw.

"Always praying," father says,
"For some bug it may devour;
Insect that it grabs and slays,
Fly or moth that comes its ways,
Journeying from flower to flower:
Insect that it may devour."

And my nurse says: "I suppose
Little imps that devil sleep,
Tickle children on the nose,
Pull their hair and pinch their toes,
Ride these things around a heap:
Little imps that devil sleep.

THE DEVIL'S RACE-HORSE

"They're their fly-by-nights, their steeds,
Door-knob eyed and weird of wing,
That they stable in the weeds
Of the garden, where it feeds,
Tiger-like, on everything:
Door-knob eyed and weird of wing.

"You can see the saddle there
Ready on its ugly back:
Or sometimes the imps ride bare,
Like the wind, with hair aflare,
Through the midnight deep and black,
Straddle of its ugly back.

"And they fly where little boys
Lie asleep within their beds:
Boys, who *all* day make a noise,
Eat a lot, and break their toys,
Fight and stand upon their heads;
Urchins safe now in their beds.

"And they come to little girls
Who lie sleeping in their cribs;
Who all day have tossed their curls,
Nibbled like a lot of squirrels,
Torn their frocks and soiled their bibs;
Romps now safe within their cribs.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

“ And these imps just flutter round
On their Devil's Horses there;
And though you are sleeping sound,
You will hear them, I'll be bound,
And soon feel them at your hair,
On their Devil's Horses there.

“ Sometimes on your face they light,
And you feel their long claws rake
Right across your nose; or right
On your lip they prance and bite,
And you writhe and scream and wake,
When you feel their long claws rake.

“ And your parents wake up, too;
Turn the light on; come and say,
'What's the *matter* now with you?
Dreaming? Had the nightmare? *Knew*
That you ate too much to-day.' —
That's what both your parents say.” . . .

Then I tell my nurse that I
Wish I was an imp, and those
Were my horses: how *I'd* fly! —
Yes, right to *her* bed, *oh my!*
And whizz round her head and nose! —
Wish I was an imp like those!

THE LITTLE BOY AND HIS SHADOW

THERE's something now that no one
knows,

That never seems to mind me —

Where *is it* that my shadow goes

That often walks behind me?

Where does it go when I come home;

For often I'm without it;

It's queer and very worrisome,

I'd like to know about it.

When I go out on sunny days,

Why, there it is beside me:

And there it skips and there it plays,

And from it I can't hide me.

I cannot run away from it,

It runs as fast as Fido;

And if I stand or if I sit

It stands and sits as I do.

But if I run into a square

Where trees stand or a dwelling,

Why, then it's gone! I wonder where!

Who knows? It's hard as spelling.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And then it never says a word;
It's surely in a trance, or
Just deaf and dumb and never heard;
If not, why *don't* it answer?

And in the moonlight, when I walk,
Why, then it walks before me
And mimics me, but will not talk,
But rather seems t' ignore me.
And I have noticed that at noon
I walk on it, it's smaller,
But in the night-time, by the moon,
It's often ten times taller.

But at the door, both day and night,
It never fails to leave me,
That is, unless there is a light
By which it may perceive me.
Why don't it go to bed with me?
Why don't it lie beside me?
It seems to lack in courtesy,
And often can't abide me.

Why should it come to skip and run
Without a word or comment,
And stay with me in moon and sun,
Then quit me in a moment?

THE LITTLE BOY AND HIS SHADOW

Why don't it come in-doors and play?

I'm sure that it is able.

Why don't it stay with me all day,

And eat with me at table?

But that's the way it is, you see,

When one is least expecting

It leaves or comes quite suddenly

From where there's no detecting.

Sometimes it's short; sometimes it's long;

Sometimes it's just a glimmer;

It acts so queer I know it's wrong,

And puzzling as my primer.

For, sometimes, when by candlelight

I go to bed, it quivers

Upon the stairs, out of the night,

And scares me into shivers.

From ghostly corners, humped and gnarled,

It leaps, or down the ceiling,

Crabbed, crookéd-kneed and knuckle-snarled,

Goes gesturing and reeling.

But where it goes when I'm in bed

And fast asleep and dreaming

No one can tell me. — Mother said

That I beat all for scheming

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And bothering her with questions: that
She wished I was as quiet
As is my shadow or — *the cat*:
Dear knows! *she* 'd profit by it.

My father said he 'd come to find
That it *is* most bewild'rin';
He had no doubt it changed its mind
As frequently as children.
"I can't," he said, "tell *where* it goes,
Or stays, when gone, denied you;
Unless it goes, as I suppose,
And lives and hides inside you."

THE GHOST

THERE's a house across the street
That nobody goes into;
Say it's haunted, yes, they do;
Ghosts *live* there, they say, or *meet*:
Saw one in a winding-sheet
At a window once, and took
To my heels and ran and ran,
Never gave another look,
Till I met a nigger-man.

And I told him. And he said,
"Dat ole house am ha'nted sure.
'Deed it wuz a ghost! a pure
Sure nuff ghost, I am afred.
Better run home; git ter bed;
Or he'll kotch yer. Lawzy me!
I won't pass dat house ter-night.
Onct I pass dar: whut'd I see?
Why, I seed a walking light.

"Yep; an' it went up an' down
Like a fire-bug. I wuz skeer'd
Wus'n you wuz. An' I heer'd

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Chains a-trompin' all aroun':
An' I laid dar on de groun'
Skeer'd to def. An' den I seed —
Whut'd yer reckon? — seed — my lands! —
Seed a skel'ton! yarse indeed!
Hulding up two skel'ton hands.

“Den I run'd jest like you did. —
Ought ter t'ar dat ole house down.
Hit's disgrace ter dis yere town —
Dat's my sintimints — an' rid
Us ob all de ghosts, instid
Ob a-letting 'em cavort
'Roun', an' skeer folks lef' an' right!
T'ing ter do would be ter start
Bonfire in it some dark night.”

Then he turned and went away.
And I hurried home and told
Father, and he said, “That old
Negro-man has had his say;
Mine I'll have another day.
Come with *me* now. Let us see
If that ghost of yours now *goes*:
If it's a reality,
Or a fraud — as I suppose.”

THE GHOST

And he took his walking-stick,
And I followed. — Sure enough,
At the window was that stuff,
Sheet, or piece of old bed-tick,
Waving in the wind. — And quick
In my father went. And — why,
Heard him laughing; and I saw
That he had the old ghost by
A long string that he could draw.

Was n't anything at all
But an old white window-blind,
That the folks had left behind,
In the window of the hall:
Had got loosened from the wall
And the wind kept flapping it. —
I laughed, too; but was almost
Just put out a little bit —
Wanted it to be a ghost.

THE POPPET-SHOW

ONCE I gave a "poppa-show":
And I had the greatest fun!
Every boy and girl I know —
That is, *nearly* every one,
Came to see it: I just put
Some old toys into a box;
Paper things that I had cut,
On a stage made out of blocks;
And the children came in flocks
When I called out, "Yo, ho, oh!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

Boy who lives next door, he came;
Took a peep and said, "That clown
'S worth the money, just the same
As most any show in town." —
Then he went away and brought
Lot of girls and boys to see;
Brought so many that they *fought*,

THE POPPET-SHOW

And were bad as they could be:
It was like a Christmas-tree:
While I stood there shouting, "Ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

Some just laughed; and one or two
Said it was n't *worth* a pin:
And another said, "He knew
When he had been taken in."
And a little girl, who paid
A gold pin right out her dress,
Cried and said she was afraid
She'd be spanked at home unless
She received it back. — I guess
She was spanked. — I said, "You know,
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

One boy tried to *hit* me then,
But the boy who lives next door
He got madder than a hen,
Knocked him down, right on the floor,
And then pulled him out and I
Helped him pull him. Then a girl
Laughed and one began to cry,
For, a boy, he pulled her curl:
Then the whole room was a whirl
While I shouted, "Oh, yo, ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Then a big boy grabbed my box,
Threw it in the midst of all;
All the paper-dolls and blocks
Clattered on the floor or wall,
Made a mighty rumpus: one
Hit me on the head a slap,
And I yelled. But it was fun;
Did n't care a cent or rap. —
Suddenly there came a tap
At the door, and I cried, "Ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

Then my mother and my nurse
Entered; and she said, "*What* boys!
Girls too! Could n't be much worse.
Making such a lot of noise.
You should all be sent to bed,
Or be whipped. I never knew
Children that were so ill-bred,
Nor a wilder, rowdier crew. —
Wonder what 'll become of you! —
Now just pack yourselves and go! —
No more pins or 'poppa-show.'"

And they went, and mother, she,
When the last of them was gone,
Left me in the nursery,
Made me put my night-clothes on:

THE POPPET-SHOW

And she took my pins away,
And I cried just fit to kill —
But she gave them back next day,
When I promised I 'd be still,
And not play like Jack and Jill,
Tumbling round and to and fro
With a noisy "poppa-show."

DOUGH FACE

MADE a face of biscuit-dough,
Which our black cook gave me
once;

And this girl named So-and-So
Said 't was funnier than a dunce.
And she took it; put it on
Like a false-face. Had it drawn
Over all her face. "Ain't it,"
So she said, "a *perfect* fit?"

She looked funny as a clown;
And I called her Dough Face; she
Laughed and said, "Let's saunter down
Where the people, too, can see.
Maybe one will recognize,
In these features, nose and eyes,
Some long-lost belovéd child,
And for very joy go wild."

It was getting dusk; and there
At the corner stood some girls;
When they saw us, I declare,
They just hollered, tossed their curls,

DOUGH FACE

Ran away; and Dough Face fast
After them. And running past
Came some boys who, when they saw,
Shouted at her, "Mardi Graw!"

And one said, "That looks to me
Like that Girlie Good Enough.
Just as dough-faced, is n't she?
Get some dirt. Let's treat her rough." —
And they got soft mud to throw.
Then she cried, "I'm So-and-So";
And the boys all shouted; for
You must know she's popular.

Then we had great times, we did:
First one boy he tried it on,
Then another; and he hid
In a house where folks were gone;
Stood there at a window where
People passing in the square
Saw him; and a nigger-man,
Scared to death, just yelled and ran.

Then another fellow clomb
A back-fence, and put the face
Over his. My! he looked rum.
Like a scarecrow in a place

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Where he never ought to be.
And he rose up suddenly
By the window with a yell,
And the cook she shrieked and fell.

But the house-man, who was there
In the kitchen, was n't scared;
He just jumped up from his chair,
Banged the door wide; out he flared,
Caught that boy and cried "police!"
Tore the dough-mask, piece by piece,
From his face: then So-and-So
Screamed at him, "You let him go!"

On the hydrant was a hose;
Quick she took it; turned it on;
Streamed it in his mouth and nose:—
In a moment we were gone,
Left him spluttering at our backs
Blind with water. We made tracks
Home. And So-and-So just crowed,—
"End of Dough Face ep-i-sode."

LITTLE BOY BAD AND LITTLE
GIRL RUDE

MY nurse she tells me stories, too,
To make me good, she says; but I —
She scares me so! — I want to cry:
And if my father ever knew,
I guess *he* 'd make things pretty hot,
And show her that she 'd better not.

Last night I could n't sleep, because
She scared me with a story; yes,
Because I had been bad, I guess,
And said I *hated* Santa Claus
And everything: and then she told
This story that just made me cold:

I

Little Boy Bad, a way he had
Of making his father and mother mad;
Until one day he ran away

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

To a wood where the cats of the witches
stay.

And there he tarried awhile to play,
For a little while in the witches' way.

II

When night drew nigh he heard a cry,
And in every bush he saw an eye.
Then, three by three, from every tree
Big coal-black cats came stealthily,
With great green eyes that seemed to be
As big as the moon in a graveyard tree.

III

Upon the ground they ringed him round,
And glared at him without a sound;
And with the glare he felt his hair
Rise slowly, slowly in despair,
While hard he shook from feet to hair.

IV

Then down the gloom, upon her broom,
An old hag-witch came shrieking, "*Room!*"
Then snarled, "*Hold tight! You're mine
to-night!*"
And grabbed and whisked him out of sight. —
And no one's seen him since that night.

LITTLE BOY BAD, LITTLE GIRL RUDE

V

Little Girl Rude was never good,
And never did the thing she should.
And so one day *she* ran away
To a wood where the owls of the goblins stay:
And there for a while she stopped to play,
For a little while in the goblins' way.

VI

When night drew near she seemed to hear
A noise of wings in the ivy sere;
Then a hooting cry went shuddering by;
And in every tree she saw an eye,
A great round eye in each tree near by.

VII

Then, two by two, from the ivy flew
Gaunt ghost-gray owls with eyes steel-blue:
And, wing to wing, within a ring,
Around her they began to swing,
And made the woods with hootings ring.

VIII

And, as the brood tu-whit-tu-whoood,
Oh, how she wished she had been good!
Her hair arose; from head to toes
Her marrow slowly, *slowly* froze,
While hard *she* shivered, teeth and toes.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

IX

And then she saw a hairy claw
Reach from beneath and clutch and draw,
Till in the ground her feet she found
While goblin laughter circled round. —
And since that night *she's* not been found.

PROBLEMS

THERE are some things I call riddles,
No one can explain or tell:

What's the *sound* that comes from fiddles,
Or the *noise* made by a bell?

What is silence? what is thunder?

And *why* do we laugh and weep?

But the strangest thing — *I wonder*

Where we go when we go to-sleep?

What are words? What makes our voices?

What's the reason we're not dumb?

What is music? What are noises? —

I have thought about them some.

I have often asked my father;

He just laughed and said, "*You're deep!*"

But what's given me *most* bother

'S where we go when we go to-sleep.

There's the wind; no one can see it;

Yet it's stronger than a man:

Where's the boy that would n't be it?

Making all the noise it can.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

What is it that makes it hover?

And what makes it roar and sweep?

But the thing *I*'ve wondered over

'S where we go when we go to-sleep.

What makes leaves and what makes flowers,

Whence they come and where they go,

And what is it we call "hours,"

Those are things *I*'d like to know.

What's the scent of a morning-glory,

Or a rose, that none can keep? —

But the thing that gives *me* worry

'S where we go when we go to-sleep.

What is sweet and what is sour?

What is taste and what is smell?

What is color in a flower?

Is there any one can tell?

Why is flavor in an apple?

And *what* is it? — Asking's cheap. —

But the question *I* would grapple

'S where we go when we go to-sleep.

And why do we walk? what makes us?

Trees don't, growing at our door:

And what is it in us wakes us

When we can't sleep any more?

PROBLEMS

And what makes us grow and never
 Stay just babies? crow and creep?
But the question is forever,
 Where do we go when we go to-sleep?

What is that which we call feeling?
 And what makes our eyes to see?
“Now,” my father says, “you’re dealing
 With some things too deep for me.
These things, son, you’d best abandon.
 They have muddled men a heap—
Things I’d like to lay *my* hand on!—
 You had better go to-sleep.”

WHAT THE TREES SAID TO THE LITTLE BOY

I

ONCE when the park
Was very dark
I slipped out and went walking;
And heard the trees
To the summer breeze,
And to each other talking.

II

And I heard them say,
"We have stood all day
In *one* spot here, and worried
To keep the sun
From each little one
Who laughed at our feet or hurried.

III

"Now every boy
And girl and toy
Is safe at home, my patience!
Why! I and you,
As their parents do,
Can talk of *our* relations."

LITTLE BOY SLEEPY

LITTLE Boy Sleepy won't go to bed,
Though the Sand Man came an hour ago,
And sand all under his eyelids spread:
Though his eyes are heavy and heavy his head,
And his little tired feet seem made of lead,
And he nods and yawns as he drags them
slow. —

Little Boy Sleepy *won't* go to bed.

Little Boy Sleepy just *has* to play,
Though his toys are tired as he, I know:
His little toy-horse in its little toy-dray
Just seems to *beg* to be put away;
It has worked so hard all day, all day,
Hauling the toy-blocks to and fro.
Little Boy Sleepy just *has* to play.

Little Boy Sleepy *won't* be undressed;
“Just one more minute to play, my oh!” —
His little lead soldier looks *so* distressed,

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And his paper rooster hangs down his crest,
And the little wool-dog just begs for rest,
And the Jack-in-the-Box looks worlds of woe.
Little Boy Sleepy *won't* be undressed.

Little Boy Sleepy lifts up his voice:—
“I want to play with my toys some mo!
I am *not* sleepy! I *want* my toys!
My little toy-cat and my bears and boys,
And my little toy-train that makes a noise,
And the little tin-horn I blow and blow.”
Little Boy Sleepy lifts up his voice.

Little Boy Sleepy just sighs and sighs;
And then he mutters, “It is n't so!
It is n't night! I must make some pies,
Some little mud pies!”—and then his eyes
Just seem to close and down he lies
In his mother's arms who rocks him slow.
Little Boy Sleepy just sighs and sighs.

TIME TO GET UP

I

THERE's nothing to do in the morning but
stew,

Till it's time to get up and dress;
Till my nurse comes in to button and pin,
And dress me more or less:
Then it's time to get up, get up, you see,
And I am as happy as happy can be.

II

For there is my drum a-calling me "Come!"
My clown a-shouting "Hooray!"
My dishes and table and little toy-stable
Just clattering "Come and play!"
And my little wood-soldiers, with foot to foot,
Seem ready to fire a toy-salute.

III

And my spade and rake just seem to ache
For me to handle and use;
And the pile of sand it seems to expand
With joy when it feels my shoes.
But the gladdest of all, the maddest of all,
That leaps to my hand, is my little red ball.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

IV

I bound and run and every one
Is happy almost as I;
With my whistle and whip I hop and skip,
And make my rocking-horse fly.
I take my horn and I make it say,
“Good morning to all! It’s a very fine day!”

V

There’s nothing to do in the morning but stew
Until it is time to rise;
Till my nurse comes in to button and pin,
A-rubbing the sleep from her eyes:
Then it’s time to get up, and hurry, you see,
Where all of my toys are waiting for me.

DILLY DALLY

I

THERE is a little girl I know
Who takes her time to come and go.
If you should ask her please to hurry,
She tries her best then to be slow:
She gives her parents lots of worry;
But she, *she* never worries — no. —
Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her “Gallie.”
From head to feet
She’s never neat,
But always shilly shally.

II

When it is time for her to rise,
She won’t get up, but lies and lies,
Her head beneath the cover:
Then down she comes with sleepy eyes,
When breakfast-time is over;
Uncombed, with shoes she never ties. —

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her "Gallie."
From head to feet
She's never neat,
But always shilly shally.

III

When it is time to go to bed,
She plays around or hangs her head,
And mopes in some dark corner,
And cries and wishes she were dead:
No girl could be forlorn
When off to bed at last she's led. —
Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her "Gallie."
From head to feet
She's never neat,
But always shilly shally.

LITTLE BIRD

I

A LITTLE bird sits in our cottonwood tree,
And perks his head and sings;
And this is the song he pipes to me
While he flirts his tail and wings:—

“Hello! hello!
You jolly little fellow!
Hello! hello! I say!
Do you hear me every morning
How I try to give you warning?
With my little song adorning
Every day, every day;
With my little song adorning every day.
I want to tell you this, sir:
You are sweeter than a kiss, sir,
You are fairer than a posy,
With your face so fresh and rosy;
Oh, I love to see you merry at your play,
Every day;
I love to see you laughing at your play.
Hello! hello!
You merry little fellow!”

II

And I run to the tree where he sings and sits,
High up on the topmost limb;
And he cocks his eye and flirts and flits
While I reply to him:—

“Hello! hello!
You cunning little fellow!
Hello! hello! I say!
You are complimenting early;
And your song is clear and pearly
As the dewdrop dripping nearly
From the spray, from the spray;
As the dewdrop dripping nearly from the spray.
Your singing is far sweeter
Than any rhyme or metre:
Oh, I love to hear you whistle,
Swinging lighter than a thistle,
And I hope you ’ll come and see me every day,
Every day;
I hope you ’ll come and see me every day.
Hello! hello!
You darling little fellow!”

HEY, LITTLE BOY

I

“**H**HEY, little boy, little boy, come to me!
Hey, little boy, little boy, Andy!
Hey, little boy, little boy, can it be
Your mouth is crumbed with candy?”

“What’s that to you? what’s that to me?
What’s that to you, nurse Mandy?
It well may be — why, *certainly*
My mouth is crumbed with candy.”

II

“Hey, little boy, little boy, go away!
Hey, boy, on what you banking?
Hey, little boy, little boy, what you say?
You surely want a spanking!”

“Not now, to-morrow, or to-day!
For that you have my thanking:
Come, wash these signs of sweets away,
And I won’t get a spanking.”

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

III

“ Hey, little boy, little boy, don’t you hear?
Hey, little boy, stop your running!
Hey, boy, come here, and tell me, dear,
Why you ’re so sweet and cunning.”

“ If I am sweet, if I am dear, —
Now don’t you go and tell, oh! —
The sweet things that one eats, you hear?
They sweeten up a fellow.”

FIDDLEDEEDEE AND THE BUMBLEBEE

'T WAS Fiddledeedee who put to sea
With a rollicking buccaneer Bumblebee:
An acorn-cup was their hollow boat —
A rakish craft was their acorn-boat —
And their sail a butterfly's wing;
Their mast, a bit o' the stem of an oat, —
A jaunty jib was this bit of an oat, —
And their rudder a hornet's sting,
By jing!
Their rudder a hornet's sting.
In an acorn-cup they put to sea,
Did Fiddledeedee and the Bumblebee.

"We 'll sail to the Isles of Tweedledumdee,"
Quoth Fiddledeedee to the Bumblebee:
So they steered past the Isles of Cream and
Ice —
Oh, cold were the Isles of Cream and Ice —
And came to the Sea of Ginger Beer;

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And there, by the City of Sugar and Spice —
The sweet, sweet City of Sugar and Spice —

 Their acorn-boat upset, my dear,

 I hear

 Their acorn-boat upset, my dear.

“Good-by to the Isles of Tweedledumdee,”
Said Fiddledeedee to the Bumblebee.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

I CAN'T get up with the chickens;
I can't get up at dark:
And what do I care for the early worm?
And what do I care for the lark?

I can't do this or that thing;
I can't do things like you;
And the thing that I do most frequent
Is the thing I never do.

I can't go where I would go,
Though I go from morn till eve;
But *some* place I go wherever I go
Whenever a place I leave.

For the law of the road is this law,
And the law is right and good:
Just go your ways and take no heed
Of how you get your food.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

And the law of the road is this law,
And the law is one to keep:
It never matters, wherever you are,
So you have a place to sleep.

And the law of the road is this law,
And the law — may it grow and grow!
Wherever you go and whatever you do
Let no one ever know.

WINTER DAYS

"THESE winter days," my father says,
 " When mornings blow and bite and
 freeze,

And hens sit cackling in the straw,
Stiff with the frost as gates that wheeze,
Remind me of my youth when, raw,
The day broke and, beneath the trees,
 Wild winds would twist,
I went to work with axe and saw,
 Or stopped to blow my mittened fist.

" These winter noons," my father croons,
" When eggs, the hens have hardly laid,
Crack open with the cold; and cows
Drink through the hole a heel has made,
Some rustic in his huddled blouse,
Bring back the noons when, with a spade,
 Down on the farm,
I pathed the snow from barn to house,
 And beat my arms to keep me warm.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

"These winter nights," so he recites,
"With those old nights are right in tune,
When cocks crew out the hours till dawn
And all night long the owlet's croon
Quavered and quivered far withdrawn;
And cold beneath the freezing moon
 The old fox-hound
Bayed where the icicles glittered wan,
 And all the old house slumbered sound."

A SONG FOR ALL DAY

A ROLLICKING song for the morn, my
boy,

A rollicking song for the morn:

It's up and out with a laugh and shout,

While the bright sun circles the world about,

And the dew is on the corn, my boy,

The dew is on the corn.

Barefoot, brown, with trousers torn,

It's up and out with the morn.

A jolly good song for the noon, my boy,

A jolly good song for the noon:

It's out and away where the wild woods sway,

And the wind and the birds have a holiday,

And whistle an oldtime tune, my boy,

And whistle an oldtime tune.

Healthy, happy, a heart of June,

It's out in the woods at noon.

A wonderful song for the eve, my boy,

A wonderful song for the eve:

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

The sunset's bars and a trail of stars,
And the falls of the creek a mine of spars,
Or a weft of crystal weave, my boy,
A weft of crystal weave.
Hungry, tired, with nothing to grieve,
It's home again at eve.

A lullaby song for the night, my boy,
A lullaby song for the night:
When crickets cry and owlets fly,
And the house-hound bays the moon on high,
And the window-lamp shines bright, my
boy,
The window-lamp shines bright.
A drowsy kiss and a bed snow-white,
And a lullaby-song for the night.

A BOY'S HEART

IT's out and away at break of day,
To frolic and run in the sun-sweet hay:
It's up and out with a laugh and shout —
Let the old world know that a boy's about.

It's ho for the creek that the minnows streak,
That the sunbeams dapple, the cattle seek;
For a fishing-pole and a swimming-hole,
Where a boy can loaf and chat with his soul.

It's oh to lie and look at the sky
Through the roof of the leaves that's built
so high:
Where all day long the birds make song,
And everything's right and nothing is wrong.

It's hey to win where the breeze blows thin,
And watch the twinkle of feather and fin:
To lie all day and dream away
The long, long hours as a boy's heart may.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

It's oh to talk with the trees and walk
With the winds that whisper to flower and
stalk:

And it's oh to look in the open book
Of your own boy-dreams in some leafy nook.

Away from the noise of the town, and toys,
To dream the dreams that are dreamed by
boys:

To run in the heat, with sun-tanned feet,
To the music of youth in your heart's young
beat.

To splash and wade in the light and shade
Of the league-long ripples the sunbeams braid:
In boyhood's wise to see with eyes
Of fancy hued as the butterflies.

To walk for hours and learn the flowers,
And things that haunt the woods and bowers:
To climb to a nest on a tree's top crest,
Where a bird, like your heart, is singing its
best.

To feel the rain on your face again,
Like the thirsty throats that the flowers strain:
To hear the call of the waterfall,
Like the voice of youth, a wonder-thrall.

A BOY'S HEART

And it's oh for me at last to see
The rainbow's end by the hillside tree:
On the wet hillside where the wild ferns hide,
Like a boy's bright soul to see it glide.

Then to laugh and run through shower and sun
In the irised hues that are arched and spun:
And, the rainbow's friend, to find and spend
The bag of gold at the rainbow's end.

BOYHOOD

O DAYS that hold us; and years that mold
us!

And dreams and mem'ries no time destroys!
Where lie the islands, the morning islands,
And where the highlands we knew when boys?

Oh, tell us, whether the happy heather
Still purples ways we used to roam;
And mid its roses, its oldtime roses,
The place reposes we knew as home.

Oh, could we find him, that boy, and bind
him, —

The boy we were that never grew, —
By whom we're haunted, our hearts are
haunted, —

What else were wanted by me and you?

Again to see it! Again to knee it!
The pond we waded, the brook we swum;
That held more pleasures, more priceless
pleasures,
Than all the treasures to which we come.

BOYHOOD

Again to follow through wood and hollow
A cowbell's tinkle, a bird's wild call,
To where they yellow, the daisies yellow,
And lights lie mellow at evenfall.

To be the leaders of oaks and cedars,
The giant hosts of worlds at war;
Or princes airy, proud princes airy,
Of Lands of Faery that lie afar.

Through scents of yarrow, where paths are
narrow,
To foot the way we only know,
That leads to places, old orchard places,
And garden spaces of Long Ago.

To climb rail fences, when dusk commences,
With young Adventure, tanned hand in hand;
And lead by starlight, by dewy starlight,
To one farm's far light a campaign planned.

Where she, our princess, mid blossoming
quinces, —
The first dear girl for whom we cared, —
And got a rating, her father's rating, —
Stands sweetly waiting, brown-eyed, brown-
haired.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

Or, in the morning, without a warning,
With health for luggage and love for spur,
To make invasion, divine invasion,
As suits occasion, of worlds for her.

With her, as eager, again beleaguer
The forest's fortress of leaf and log;
And pierce its vastness, its gloomy vastness,
And storm its fastness with stick and dog.

And from its shadows' rich Eldorados
The untold gold of blossoms bring:
And, as in story, in song and story,
Beard Wildness hoary, like some old king.

Or lead lost legions through unknown regions,
The pirate kings of isles unfound:
On haystacks golden, our galleons golden,
Sail oceans olden of meadow ground.

And from those caitiffs, the hideous natives,
Invisible tribes that swarm the wood,
To rescue Molly, or Peg, or Polly,
With her dear dolly as pirates should. . . .

O tanned and freckled and sunbeam-speckled!
O barefoot joy that romped the years!
O reckless rapture! O long-lost rapture!
Beyond the capture of all our tears!

EPILOGUE

I

WHEN dusk falls cool as a rained-on rose,
And a tawny tower the twilight shows,
With the crescent moon, the silver moon, the
curved new moon in a space that glows,
A turret window that grows a-light;
There is a path that my Fancy knows,
A glimmering, shimmering path of night,
That far as the Land of Faery goes.

II

And I follow the path, as Fancy leads,
Over the mountains, into the meads,
Where the firefly cities, the glowworm cities,
the fairy cities are strung like beads,
Each city a twinkling star:
And I live a life of valorous deeds,
And march with the Fairy King to war,
And ride with his knights on milk-white steeds.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR

III

Or it's there in the whirl of their life I sit,
Or dance in their houses with starlight lit,
Their blossom houses, their flower houses,
 their elfin houses, of fern-leaves knit,
With fronded spires and domes:
And there it is that my lost dreams flit,
And the ghost of my childhood, smiling, roams
With the fairy children so dear to it.

IV

And it's there I hear that they all come true,
The fairy-stories, whatever they do —
Elf and goblin, dear elf and goblin, loved elf
 and goblin and all the crew
Of witch and wizard and gnome and fay,
And prince and princess, that wander through
The storybooks we have put away,
The fairytales that we loved and knew.

V

The face of Adventure lures you there,
And the eyes of Danger bid you dare,
While ever the bugles, the silver bugles, the
 far-off bugles of Elfland blare,

EPILOGUE

The fairy trumpets to battle blow;
And you feel their thrill in your heart and hair,
And you fain would follow and mount and go
And march with the Fairies anywhere.

VI

And she — she rides at your side again,
Your little sweetheart whose age is ten:
She is the princess, the fairy princess, the
 princess fair that you worshipped when
You were a prince in a fairytale;
And you do great deeds as you did them then,
With your magic spear, and enchanted mail,
Braving the dragon in his den.

VII

And you ask again, — “Oh, where shall we
 ride,
Now that the monster is slain, my bride?” —
“Back to the cities, the firefly cities, the
 glowworm cities where we can hide,
The beautiful cities of Faeryland. —
And the light of my eyes shall be your guide,
The light of my eyes and my snow-white
 hand —
And there forever we two will abide.”





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